

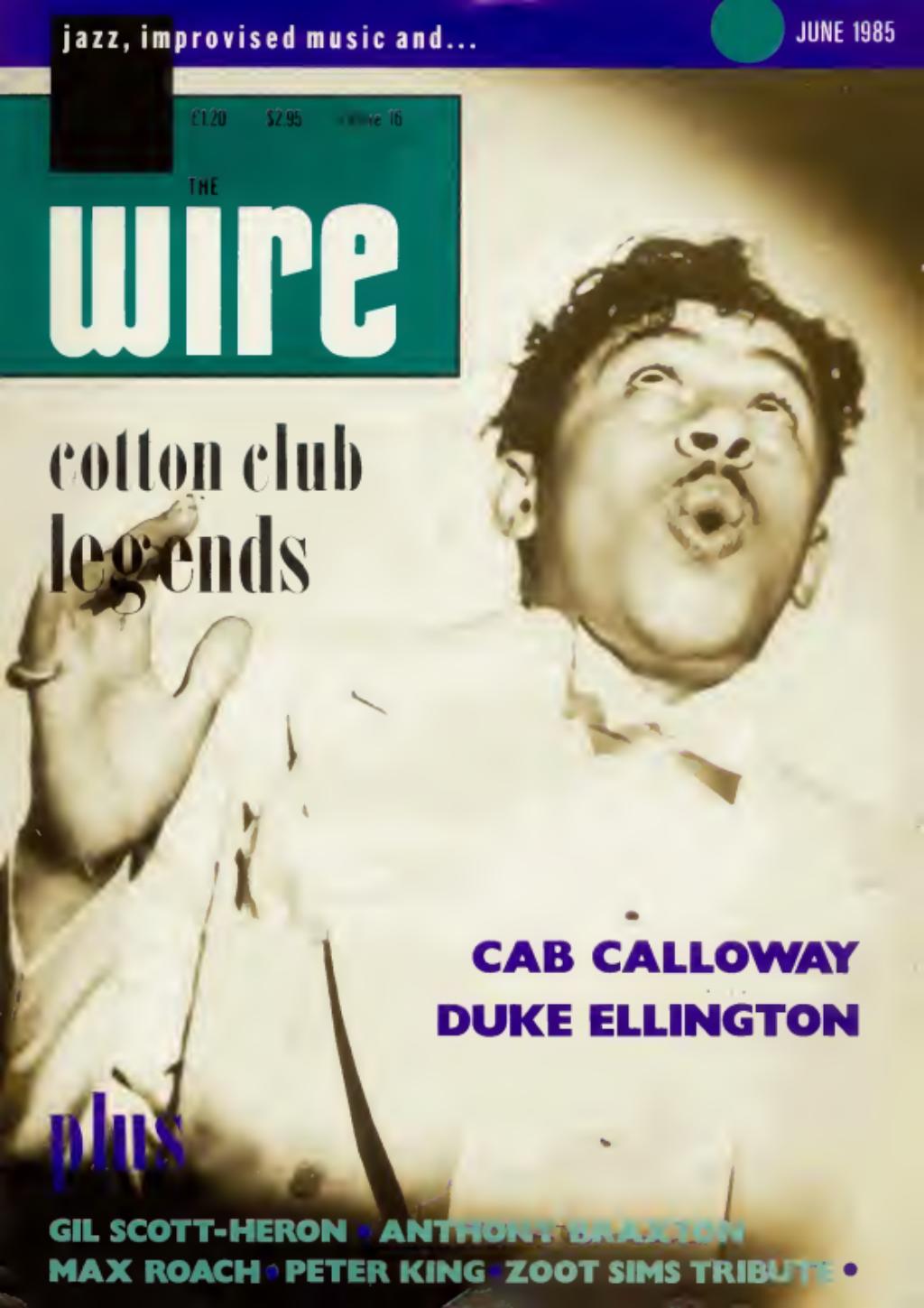
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JUNE 1985

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THE wire

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THE WIRE

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NEWS·WIRED



AS THE WIRE approaches its third anniversary another important milestone in our life is reached, and with it some changes, as we march on towards our goal.

Firstly I'm pleased to welcome Richard Cook as Deputy Editor. Richard has, for the last three years, helped to keep the jazz flag flying at *New Musical Express*, the thinking person's rock weekly, and also contributed several major *Wire* features on leading jazz/improvising musicians. His presence will sharpen *The Wire's* editorial edge, which has been a major factor in its success to date. In addition to overseeing the production, Richard will continue to contribute important features and, with myself, guide *The Wire* forward.

We also change distributors next month which will hopefully make us more available in newsagents. Don't try W.H. Smiths yet, though, we enter there in September when we will achieve full national distribution. To tie in with this, we will be mounting a big promotion campaign including concert events.

Hopefully, you will also notice a major change in design. This is part of a revamp leading up to the September issue when another surprise will appear. Intrigued? Stay with us.

ANTHONY WOOD

News

▼ BRACKNELL MOVES TO PENDLEY

CHARLIE HADEN's Liberation Orchestra, Art Blakey, and the Kip Hanrahan Band head the line-up for a new festival replacing Bracknell next month (as we reported in the April issue). Titled Jazz at the Manor, the festival will run from 4-7 July at Pendley Manor near Tring in Hertfordshire.

As at Bracknell, the festival will range across the whole spectrum of jazz, incorporating leading British musicians and major international groups. This year there will be a particular emphasis on young players' workshops and master classes. The music will take place in covered grandstands on the lawns, in the 300-seat Arts Centre, and various rooms in the Manor itself.

The programme known at pretime is:-

Thurs July 4:	Mainstream Night (details to be announced).
Fri July 5:	To be announced.
Sat July 6:	Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers, Working Week, Kip Hanrahan (inc Jack Bruce & Steve Swallow), Tenor Tonic (inc Allan Skidmore & Paul Rogers), Peter Ponzo/John Taylor Duo.
Sun July 7:	Charlie Haden Liberation Orch (inc Amina Myers & Dewey Redman), Paris Reunion Band (inc Woody Shaw, Johnny Griffin, Nathan Davis & Dizzy Reece), Peter King Quintet (inc Henry Lowther & Spike Wells), John Warren's thirteen-piece band, a saxophone workshop (sponsored by Buffet Saxophones) organised by Peter Ponzo, Don Rendell & Alan Skidmore.

The site is an hour from London and is easily accessible from the North, Midlands and West - both the M1 and M30 are close. Camping and parking facilities will be provided.

Further details from Serious Productions (01-240 2430).



Charlie Haden

SPIRIT LEVEL are touring in June. Sheffield: Leadmill (19th); Stockton: Dovecot (20); Stoke: Duke William (21); Leeds: Trades Club (22); London: 100 Club (23). This is their first London gig this year and they will be supported by Keith Tippett.

SAXIST Gail Thompson and her quartet (Dave Cliff, Phil Stenopoulis & Clark Tracey) are joined by Allan Barnes for a concert in London's Battersea Park on 11 June, starting at 7.30. Admission free.

FIRST HOUSE (Ken Stubbs, Djengo Bates, Mike Hutton & Martin France) continue their first national tour with the following dates:
 June: (1) Leeds Trades Club; (2) Derby, Browns Safford Street; (4) York, Arts Centre; (5) Darlington Arts Centre; (6) Manchester, Band on the Wall; (8) Exeter Arts Centre; (9) Birmingham, Stratford Hotel.

THE ROVA Saxophone Quartet from San Francisco are touring Europe all summer and appeared at last month's Moers Festival. Next month, amongst other dates, they will give a workshop on improvisation in Vienna plus concerts in France and Italy, and hopefully some appearances in Britain.



Rova

● GLAMORGAN SUMMER SCHOOL

This well-known jazz course, formerly the Barry Jazz Course, will take place from 27 July to 10 August at the Polytechnic of Wales (Treforest).

The tutors will be Brian Waite (organising tutor), Gordon Beck, John Taylor (Piano), Ken Baldock & Dave Green (Basses), Steve Arguelles & Alan Ganley (Drums), Stan Sulzman & Peter King (Sax), John Etheridge (Guitar), Henry Lowther (Trumpet) and Chris Pyne (Trombone).

Applications should be addressed to Brian Waite, 127a Sutton Park Road, Kidderminster, Worcestershire, Tel. 0562 765308.

NEWSWIRED

• DUNDEE FESTIVAL

GIL SCOTT-HERON and Don Lanphere are the main attractions set for the third Dundee Jazz Festival between 5–8 June at the Rep Theatre in Tay Square.

The programme is as follows: Wednesday 5th – Martin Taylor Quartet, Carol Kidd/Sandy Taylor, Thursday 6th – a celebration of New Orleans (sponsored by B & Q Superstores); Friday 7th – Don Lanphere Quartet (inc Guy Barker & Don Friedman), Saturday 8th – The Gil Scott-Heron Band. Concerts start at 7.45pm.

Information from Platform Dundee (0382 23281 ext 3118).

THE ARTS Council is inviting applications for bursaries for jazz musicians which are intended to help in the preparation of specific projects within the jazz/improvised music area. The scheme is open to all musicians except full-time students.

Previous applicants may re-apply, except those who received bursaries in 1983–85. Last year twenty-two bursaries of between £400 and £1600 were awarded. Closing date for applications is 1 July.

A new bursary for electro-acoustic music has been established by the Arts Council along similar lines to the jazz scheme. Closing date for this is 20 June. Application forms are available from John Muir, Music Officer, 105 Piccadilly, London W1V 0AU (enclosing a s.a.e.).

• RECORD FAIR

The Thames Valley Record Club is organising a black music record fair covering jazz, rhythm and blues, soul and reggae on Sunday 21 July at the Clarendon, Hammersmith, London. All enquiries concerning booking of stalls should be made to Nick Duchett on 0734 588070.

• JAZZ ON RADIO

If you live in Surrey and NE Hampshire, Bob Singfield presents jazz each alternate Friday on his "Black And Blue" programme on County Sound starting at 7.30pm.

Club Dates

• CLUB DATES – LONDON

SEVEN DIALS JAZZ CLUB, 46 Earlham Street – June (6) Out Chants (Jim Dvorak, Nick Evans, Bill Katz, Brian Abrahams etc); (13) John Warren Band; (20) Mike Mower Band; (27) Soldiers Of The Road (inc Harry Beckett, Elton Dean, Evan Parker, Jo Gallivan).

M & M JAZZ BAR, Mary Magdalene Crypt, Munster Square, NW1 – June (7) Frode Gjerstad, Simon Picard Quartet, Mario Ventura Trio.

THE COOLER, Rosemary Branch, 2 Shepperton Road, N1 – June (5) Makeshift; (12) Steve Noble & Alan Wilkinson; (19) G F. Fitzgerald; (26) Hugh Metcalfe & Friends.

THE CLINKER, Crown & Castle, 600 Kingsland Road, E8 – June (7) Ian Hinchcliffe & Kevin O'Connor; (14) Jack Wright Quartet & Films; (21) Gilbert Adair & Hugh Metcalfe; then closed until 5 July.

• CLUB DATES – REGIONS

BIRMINGHAM, Strathclyde Hotel, Hagley Road – June (2) Peter King Quartet; (9) First House

NEWCASTLE – June (16) Charlie Byrd Trio (Civic Hall, *Gesford*); (25) Waso (Corner House Heaton).

OXFORD, Improvisers Co-op – June (28) Four Corners – Peter Hall, Evan Thomas, Peter Hall Group. Plus regular concerts on the last Friday of each month.

SHEFFIELD, Other Musics, Grapes Inn – June (23) Evan Parker, John Russell, Roger Turner, Ladonna Smith & Davey Williams.

CHELTENHAM MUSIC FESTIVAL – July

(12) Peter King Quartet (Queens Hotel); (13) Dave Price Trio (Axion Centre); (16) Norman Thatcher (Tray jazz) (Cross Hands Inn, Tewkesbury Road); (17) Errol Clarke (Queens Hotel), (19) Distinct Six (Queens Hotel); (20) (Lunchtime) Dave Price Trio (Axion Centre), (22) Gloucestershire Youth Jazz Band (Thirsteans Gallery); (23) Ken Colyer; (24) Chris Biscoe & Pete Jacobson (Queens Hotel), (26) Eddie Vinson (Queens Hotel).

CARDIFF – June (13–14) First House (Gibbs Jazz Club); (22) Guest Stars (Chapler Arts Centre)

SWANSEA – June (10) Iain Ballamy Quartet (Taliensia Arts Centre); (21) Charlie Byrd Trio (Mermaid Hotel)



District 6

• IMPROVISING FESTIVAL

London Musicians Collective, 42 Gloucester Avenue NW1, present an improvising festival in June; dates are (7) Alex Maguire, Ian McLachlan, Steve Noble Ghosts; (8) Alex Kolkowski, Dave Wilson & Alex Maguire, Alan Wilkinson, Steve Noble & Philip Eastop; (9) Ubiquity Orchestra (inc Alex Maguire & Steve Noble).

On Record

The Boplicity label has acquired the rights to the legendary West Coast Contemporary label – first releases will include *Art Pepper Meets The Rhythm Section*, Harold Land's *The Fox*, Jimmy Woods' *Conflict* and Ornette Coleman's *Tomorrow Is The Question*.

In addition there will be a previously unissued session by Miles Davis recorded at The Lighthouse, possibly in 1953.

Already available from Boplicity is their budget price Bop City series billed as "The Young Persons Guide To The New York Sixties Scene". The first two releases are titled *Straight Ahead* and *Midnight Scene*.

Counterpoint Distribution have released twelve more records in the Black Lion American Jazz Classics Series, retailing at £2.99. The latest batch includes Don Byas – *Anthropology*, Barney Kessel and Stephane Grappelli – *Limehouse Blues*, Ben Webster – *Duke's In Bed*, Dollar Brand – *This Is Dollar Brand* and Thelonious Monk – *The Man I Love*.

Discovery Records are importing from CBS France three Duke Ellington albums of mainly unissued material from 1956–62. Titled *Duke '56–62*, vols one and two are doubles, vol three is a single album. Amongst other Discovery imports are *Bob Brookmeyer & Friends* (inc Stan Getz, Herbie Hancock & Gary Burton), Big Bill Broonzy – *Big Bill's Blues* (both on CBS) and Jay McShann/Eddie Vinson – *Live In France* and Clarence Gatemouth Brown – *More Stuff On Black And Blue*.

• RECORD SPINNERS

Jazz records are being spun every Monday at the Old Globe pub next to Shepway Green Tube starting at 8pm. The records range from "Armstrong to Rollins", spun by DJs Craig and Lloyd.

• WOMAD

THE BRISTOL-BASED Womad collective were responsible for the excellent festival staged at Shepton Mallet three years ago and a smaller one last year. This year's festival takes place in the last week of June and includes African superstar musician Franco as well as Jazira and many more.

To whet our appetites, the Womad organisers are in the process of releasing a set of Talking Books. These are LPs sleeved within the pages of an accompanying magazine. The first issue (there will be six) is an introduction to the series and features music from all over the world. It features Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan from Pakistan, Aboriginal artists from Australia, and Toto La Momposina from Colombia. Volume two will focus on Africa and volume three on Europe.

These first three Talking Books are available on a subscription scheme for £15.00 (inc p&p) from Womad, 3 Floor, 65 Park St, Bristol. Tel. 0272 292024.

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BRIAN MORTON'S article and letter on the question of "race" and jazz are so contradictory and confused that it's difficult to know where to begin answering him. To give him the benefit of the doubt, if his aim is to highlight the destructive effects of white criticism which uses its authority so as to imprison black art in a stereotype of mere "racial" anger, then he has my support even if he makes inordinately heavy weather of this simple point. All

view that the techniques and pleasures of great black music can be grasped under the heading "protest". But his quotation of Ralph Ellison's description of black life as "within and against" should have led him to ask "against what?". Instead, he has allowed himself to become mesmerised by the "within".

For Morton, protest and politics are narrowly conceived and made up of little more than the ballot box on one hand and an "ideological message" on the other.

aesthetics in which the capacity to articulate black protest and affirmation would play a central part. It is significant then, that he draws his understanding of the scope and intensity of racial politics from the work of Genet, Kerouac and Mailer, writers whose various relationships to black life and experience have been ambiguous to say the least.

Morton's pieces are important. They signal that seeing the arts of Afro-America as produced in a blood-stained struggle out of slavery and into modernity and citizenship is becoming very untasteful. My impression is that white writers are currently less absorbed in the fantasies of pleasure and danger which were draped round black bodies in the Fifties and Sixties. It is much more voguish these days to deny that the cultural and political conflicts which became recognisable as racial ones have any real force or significance. It is increasingly common therefore for white critics to write the political traditions out of the black lives and musics they criticise just as Morton has done. There is a tendency to suggest that their specific relationship to black culture is the only possible relationship which can be had with it.

ON THE WIRE

stereotypes are distorting and dangerous not least when those whose experiences they twist and compress begin to internalise them. Black life and art are too subtle, complex and multi-faceted to be reduced to the mere effects of racism. There is love in our lives as well as dread

"It is increasingly common for white critics to write the political traditions out of the black lives and musics they criticise ..."

and in America, if not in Britain, blacks are included in the nation's portrait of itself. This makes things unpredictable.

Yet Morton appears to be saying something else. His fundamental concern seems to be to deny that the artistic forms, themes and preoccupations for which jazz has become a dubious shorthand correspond in any unique historical way with the experiences of Afro-America. He correctly questions the simplistic

The very existence of black American musics can, however, be read as an argument for developing a more extensive and less Eurocentric view of political sensibility and organisation. It has been in its cultural institutions alone that black America has been able to give a voice to what Richard Wright called its tradition of bitterness, lament, despair and hope. Its creativity has been integral to a struggle for survival which exists beyond any facile notion of protest. It combines dissent against the conditions of oppression with their transcendence and resistance to the climate of racial oppression with the necessary means of negotiating it at an everyday level. Political activity is inseparable from the need to strengthen, not only the individual artist but the community as a whole – a community both constructed and celebrated in the active relationship between performer and audience characteristic of all new world black musics.

Like that elsewhere in the diaspora black American musical tradition has created forms which rework African motifs and styles. Forms which in themselves have posed a challenge to the processes by which the music has been marketed and sold beyond the context in which it was originally played and immediately consumed. Jazz has been central to the resistance to commodification and reification. There is another dimension of politics here, a political economy.

Morton wags the finger of his pseudo-erudition at those who have advocated an

"It has been in its cultural institutions alone that black America has been able to give a voice to what Richard Wright called its tradition of bitterness, lament, despair and hope."

thus collapsing the particular into a general, idealistic portrait of humankind which is at best premature and at worst downright insulting.

Morton sets out to consign the race politics of producing and consuming black musics to an early grave. The black and white masks to which he refers certainly conceal a common humanity, but the political forces to which they refer cannot be defused simply by denying their existence ■

Black Politics White Politics

A personal opinion by Paul Gilroy



Derek Bailey, Steve Lacy

THE INCUS FESTIVAL

Arts Theatre Club, London: 22-28 April.

Richard Cook and Kenneth Ansell
attend the improvisers' festival that
celebrated fifteen years of the Incus
record label, run by Derek Bailey and
Evan Parker.

■ MONDAY

EVAN PARKER AND DEREK BAILEY

AS A curtain raiser, Mr Bailey and Mr Parker gave us an evening of solos and duets: the needles of the guitar and the endless thread of the saxophone. Having dwelt at ponderous length on these two recently, there's little new I can report or divine from the music – except that it was as different as it usually is. Actually, some of it was extraordinarily different.

Bailey's two solos showed his opposite sides flirting wildly with each other: the deadpan prankster and the hard musical mind. In his second exploration, a fiendish maze of wrong scales, hilbilly plunks and sober attempts at a frug, we expected a joke at any moment. Parker's soprano solo had no such merriment: the customary velocity allocated a couple of circular feasts of cross-ply amidst the many openings entered for a moment and instantly shut again. Another episode from the great work.

In tandem their conversation remains as oblique but respectful as it was on Incus 16, now a decade past. I don't know if they can take it any "deeper": as their responses to each other's sparks have grown wiser, they've rubbed off any harsh moments of surprise. What this dialogue creates is a sense of familiarity that's constantly rearranged: the same, only different. Without sweet melodies

and nostalgic chords, their interplay has become as affecting as it is provocative.

■ TUESDAY

STEVE LACY AND DEREK BAILEY

A study waits to be written on Derek Bailey and his partners in duel. Where he spins a micromesh with Braxton, his work with Steve Lacy has the rustic cunning of wickerwork logic. In their duets the music ran as if in parallel worlds – with his stately, acrid lines, always leaning towards some wished-for high peak, Lacy chose to intercut with Derek's motifs only rarely and circumspectly. At speed it sounded like two intensely detailed circuits flashing together, but there was actually little criss-crossing of activity. Rather than pushing, the players offered each other a detailed critique, and the result was a searching yet oddly internalised music.

It was, inevitably, as songful to the ears as

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the soprano player's work always is – even Bailey was inveigled into a certain prettiness here and there. When they chased each other to an unreachable high note to close one piece, you couldn't help cheering. Good neighbours, mulling things over

■ WEDNESDAY-FRIDAY COMPANY

Disaster is courted as frequently as triumph in Company. Bailey's chosen sextet certainly offered calamity as readily as a satisfactory outcome. With Alex Schlippenbach absent, the group was perhaps too much of a chamber balance to start with – three strings and three horns – and without the textural nous of a piano, the freedom tended to work out in extremes of some sort.

The opening duets of the first night were cordial enough. It was in the concluding quartet of Lacy, Maarten Altena, George Lewis and Philip Eastop that a mounting sense of strangeness became manifest. The players volleyed unanswered effects around an ever-widening court, and only the bassist seemed in touch with planet Earth, by some miracle, it held together. But a fascinating crisis was already under way.

By the second night it was clear that Eastop was the key member (and weakness) of this Company. The least experienced among several veteran improvisers, his French horn took on a kind of desperately forlorn quality at times. After the interplay with Lacy on the previous night, his duel with the older man sounded astonishingly awry, with the saxophonist almost viciously leading him up blind alleys. As Lewis was dismantling his trombone at every chance, it was left to the string players – Phil Wachsmann especially –

to make points in the confused melee played by the whole group. The last night would surely have bigger shocks in store.

In fact, it wound up politely and rather tamely. A quartet by Lacy and the strings was absorbing and well-mannered, a duo by Eastop and Lewis found the trombonist's ripost form, and the other man again seemed rather closed off. The night ended without any resolution, but perhaps that's the point of Company. And there was plenty of tension in Derek's announcements: could he remember who would play with who?

■ SATURDAY PARKER/RUTHERFORD/LOEVENS BAILEY/BENNIK/REIJSEGER

Saturday summoned the real climax of the week. Before a packed house, Parker led a trio with Paul Lovens and Paul Rutherford, the latter depurising for the missing Schlippenbach. Their set was magnificent. Parker and Rutherford enacted the throes of an estrangement gradually healing: the trombonist, hesitant at first, growled his way into statements of full-bodied barking. But it was Lovens who consistently gripped the attention. This tiny man plays his percussion with scientific grace and precision: each crack and cymbal glitter is measured, a complete turn; often he plays so quietly that a sudden loudness is frightening. His singing saw almost weeps. He makes a unique momentum.

Han Bennink might be Lovens' alto ego: he is always huge and loud. The set with Bailey and cellist Ernst Reijseger was, more or less, a not. Words can hardly describe the moment when, during a duet of some intensity from cello and guitar, a string dangling from a

fifteen-foot bargepole appeared far above the stage.

Han found a fire bucket, fired sticks into the stalls, rustled up a noisy tidal wave when actually at his kit, disappeared inside a drum case and generally wrung the most heated outbursts imaginable from the imperturbable Bailey and the goofily intellectual Reijseger, who as a foil is a real find. "If anyone finds this particularly unpleasant they should leave now," advised Derek – none of us did, of course. But it was left to him to provide the most outrageous moment of the night: he began playing 'You Go To My Head'. Even Bennink, inside his packing case, was moved to remark, "Sounds very jazzy from in here!"

Richard Cook

■ TUESDAY

EVAN PARKER-GEORGE LEWIS

THE SECOND night of the Incus Festival brought together two virtuosic duos in Bailey-Lacy and Parker-Lewis; yet all four musicians succeeded in employing their virtuosity as simply a tool in their music-making, and avoided the pitfalls of allowing that virtuosity to become an end in itself.

Lewis and Parker tossed ideas between them in a friendly, relaxed manner. Lewis dropped his warm, burped trombone notes about Parker's tenor switchback dance, and hissed, sucked and popped the often unvoiced utterances of his deconstructed trombone into the swelling lines of his partner's soprano stream. Each pitched his contributions, at best, into the heart of his accomplice's work, and the responsiveness of the duo was such that these incursions were comfortably accommodated into the unfolding musical line.

Ernest Reijseger, Han Bennink



■ WEDNESDAY-FRIDAY
COMPANY

Company - Derek Bailey's pool of improvising musicians - occupied three days at the centre of the festival. This selection was comprised of a group of seasoned improvisers with the exception of Philip Eastop, who was perhaps least versed in public improvising: the stone

confining his contributions to the use of articulated notes of determined pitch.

By the final night of the Company season, Eastop's contribution had come into its own. In a duo with George Lewis he proved to be a more-than-adequate partner capable of introducing and reworking material, of instigating ideas and of an exploration of the

musical discipline. Detail and ideas raced through the music at a breathless, but never rushed or confused, pace. It was a taut, razor-sharp set.

■ SUNDAY

THE PARKER PROJECT

The festival concluded on Sunday evening with Parker's Project, the third in an occasional series which to date has included projects at Pisa (ref Inca 37) and at Actual '82 in London. The six-strong ensemble played two full sets of quite contrasting character.

The first was exploratory and low-key with musicians gently prodding and folding musical ideas together, examining them tentatively to see if they would gel. As the set progressed they did so with increased confidence, although the overall feel was one of common ground gradually being established. This was especially true of Curran and Lytton, whose use of electronics have always been centred on quite different concerns. Where Curran's has always had a tendency towards the sweet and tonal, Lytton has used the raw edge of sound he achieves with his "live electronics" set-up as an incisive tool in his armoury of resources.

It was the contrast of their two styles which was one of the unusual and fascinating aspects of the group, one echoed in the construction of the sextet as a whole. Parker, Wheeler and Lewis explored the acoustic possibilities of their unamplified instruments; in this they could be joined by cellist Reisinger who was also constituting a link (as was Lytton's percussion) with the electronic

LIVE WIRE

which set up ripples in the pool.

The first concert was broken down into a series of duos and small group sessions in which the musicians effectively mapped out the musical areas they brought forward for consideration. Lacy uncoiled his long, serpentine soprano saxophone lines. Altena conjured resonant, deep and unexpected sounds from his bass (both musicians obviously settling into a comfortable musical relationship derived from shared experience and perception). Lewis further explored the territories outlined in his duo with Parker the previous night. Wachsmann combined his piercingly haunting contributions with more abrasive, disconcerting sounds, and Bailey let his stark notes tumble and then contrasted them with sections revealing a proximity to blues idioms which had never been more clearly stated in his recent playing. For his part, Eastop - during his first of three concerts - was more inclined to follow than to instigate,

less orthodox attributes of his instrument. Both musicians drew on a whole range of instrumental coloration and texture, both voiced and unvoiced, in a good-natured exchange. As they undertook to play a second piece it was easy to agree with Lewis' comment that it was "luck-pushing time", yet they pulled a further stream of ideas together into a coherent, albeit shorter, improvisation.

The quartet of Bailey, Altena, Wachsmann and Lacy pooled their talents to erect a more ruggedly coagulated music altogether. Their dense textures and occasionally scurilous invention (Lacy, for instance, playing off against himself through the echo-delay system Wachsmann was applying to his violin) proved rich and rewarding, at times reaching an extraordinary level of intensity. It was apparent from their music-making that these were accomplished musicians aware of each other's work, concerning themselves with the full expression of a highly evolved

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NICK WHITE



Paul Lovens

hardware through the use of his skeletal electric cello. As these diverse elements worked towards some form of consensus, the musicians took it upon themselves to provoke movement, rather than gently prod. At one point, Curran – drawing from his computer-electronic hardware the warm chatter of a marimba – doubled up the tempo, hauling his partners up in an enchanting babble of sound, without losing its particular warmth and growing intimacy.

The second set was of a quite different character: more volcanic and volatile, displaying, it seemed, the increased mutual confidence of the musicians. For the most part, quieter sections were characterised by a dark, brooding quality liable at any moment to erupt into peaks of agitation or violence. Wheeler's brass flashed through the organic body of music, Lewis squeezed his contributions into all its corners, Reijseger danced about its epicentre and Parker often provided an urgent, wriggling underflow at its heart. Between them, the six participants forged a living, charged music that excited and satisfied.

All-in-all, it was an entirely appropriate close to a festival that had been devoted to a living music; a festival which celebrated survival without reiterating the past, and demonstrated in the most emphatic manner that there was plenty of life here yet.

Kenneth Ansell

■ CORNELIUS CARDEW'S MUSIC Arts Council Contemporary Music Network tour. Bloomsbury Theatre, London: 6 March.

THE STREETS outside the Bloomsbury Theatre were littered with discarded banners and leaflets, the jetsam of an afternoon rally of public service workers in support of the miners. By then, of course, the miners' strike was – uneasily – over, leaving the strong undertow of feelings, relief, anger, determination, in some a sense of betrayal, that characterised its year-long course.

Inside the theatre, with an irony he would

have recognised but could scarcely have liked, Cornelius Cardew's "Boolavogue" was being played, on two pianos, by John Tilbury and Frederic Rzewski. In the years before his accidental death in 1981, Cardew had turned away from conventional concert settings and towards a militant left-wing activism that might have suggested the afternoon and the back of a lorry as a more appropriate time and place for this music than the usual concert-hour and a building bearing the name of a movement associated with bourgeois aestheticism and political disengagement. What made the ironies all the sharper, as John Tilbury pointed out, was that the final movement of "Boolavogue" was based on a Nineteenth Century strike-song "Blackleg Miner", if that wasn't enough, the next tour date was Nottingham. (No one seemed inclined to mention that "Boolavogue"'s first movement came from an Irish Republican song; the week after the Newry police station bombing that was a less happy association.)

The "Cornelius Cardew's Music" tour provided the best opportunity since the Queen

an indeterminate number of players and instruments. Along with "The Great Learning", this was Cardew's most determined exercise in aleatory technique and in the principles of controlled improvisation.

The second half of the concert featured the later, more political work. Casually dismissed as banal by *The Times'* Paul Griffiths, short pieces like "Consciously" and "Dartmoor" (the latter inspired by Scots Communist Willie Gallagher) are nonetheless true to Cardew's attempt to link popular forms – often with an ideological or polemical component – with classical techniques. The touchstone for this, perhaps Cardew's best-known work, is "East Is Red", played on fiddle and piano. In it, Oriental tonalities give way to a ponderous, chorded central section and an ironic coda that unpicks the whole thing, there is even a whistled accompaniment. "East Is Red" was a resounding success at its first performance and remains curiously compelling a dozen years later, even with the tattering of the political optimism behind it.

Perhaps the closest parallel to Cardew's is

LIVE WIRE

Elizabeth Hall memorial concert of 1982 to hear Cardew in some bulk. In addition to Tilbury and Rzewski, the group featured clarinettist Ian Mitchell who performed the solo, Mao-inspired "Mountains" on his bass horn, virtuoso cellist Rohan de Saram, Alexander Balanescu on violin and Cardew's old AMM colleagues Eddy Prevost and Keith Rowe. The line-up alone emphasised the range of Cardew's musical interest, ranging as it did from contemporary concert music to improvisation and agitprop. Only the rock-inspired People's Liberation Music phase wasn't clearly represented.

The whole group came together for a first half performance of sections from "Treatise", a graphic score from the mid-Sixties and tor

the career of Percy Grainger. Though their radicalism was of vastly different sorts, both were obsessed with the democratisation of music, both were reviled alternately for obscurantism and popular banality, both experimented quite consciously with "free" forms and with reconstructed folk and ethnic musics; both went some considerable way towards resolving the most perplexing and pointless of all intellectual and cultural dichotomies, that between avant-gardism and populism.

Cornelius Cardew would not have liked Thatcher's England but then, had he lived, England might have looked and sounded rather different.

Brian Morton



PHOTOGRAPH BY STAN BRITT

"I just lost a good friend. The world lost a very fine musician — he'll be sorely missed. He was a great player. In the thirty-five years we knew each other, we never had any disagreements about music, or anything."

"Last time we worked together was the second week in January, I think, this year. We did a week's engagement at the Blue Note, New York. He was a little tired, and he did miss one night when he wasn't feeling well. The doctor told him to stay at home. Which he did. He went in to see the doctor the next day — and that's when he learned that, in addition to everything else he was going through, he had an ulcer. But he came in the next night, and he was obviously kind of weak — a little tentative, to begin with, in his playing. But it's funny, as the night wore on, he got stronger. And at the end of the night, sounded just like his old self. He was just a trouper. I guess his desire was so great that it transcended all his physical problems."

"My friend Zoot, he really was something..."

— Al Cohn (on the death of his long-time musical associate and close friend Zoot Sims)

ZOOT ALWAYS has been something rather special in the jazz firmament. Both as a player as well as a person.

John Haley Sims, from Inglewood, California, was rarely a let-down — musically or otherwise. For this writer, who had the extra good fortune of meeting with and talking to Zoot on several occasions, it's a toss-up as to whether it was more pleasurable to hear him blow, or to spend what were always happy times in his company.

Warmth, of course, was a quintessential part of Zoot's marvellous talents as a saxophonist (soprano as well as tenor). Undoubtedly, it was this warmth of expression — personally and musically — which allows him to join that small, select body of jazzmen about whom one can never recall hearing bad things said. For one thing, he just wasn't that sort of guy. As a performer, too, he remains one of the best-loved of all major soloists, of his or any other generation. That essential warmth apart, it was as much his ability to fit that made him such a welcome addition to big bands and small combos alike, covering a wide area of jazz expression.

(True, even the ubiquitous Mr Sims would have been hard-put to enmesh himself, comfortably and naturally, within the more extreme avenues of contemporary jazz. Zoot, though, was never one to put down younger guys with newer ways of self-expression. He'd merely take a quizzical, sometimes faintly-amused stance, never allowing his own thoughts to be construed as being anti-progress. On the few occasions the subject of what is sometimes known as the avant-garde in jazz came into conversation, Zoot would merely shrug philosophically and say very

ZOOT SIMS

re: a special person I knew

IAl Cohn and Stan Britt pay their last respects to one of the best-loved tenor players in jazz.

little. Once, though, he did venture a word in defence of the forward-thinking, who all too often get slagged-off by those of his generation, by insisting, firmly: "You can't just bad-mouth everything new, everyone new. Remember how some people put down Bird when he was alive. And we all know what Bird means to jazz history... I hope..."

IN THE TRADITION

Zoot Sims was, in most ways, your archetypal jazzman. His very nickname itself was a jazz appellation. Throughout his long and distinguished career – stretching, as it did, back to the early days of a still grossly-overlooked Central Avenue jazz scene – he'd become involved in practically every aspect of life of the typical jazz musician of the 1940s (and thereafter) in the "classic" tradition. Right from a disgustingly young age, he'd rubbed shoulders with many of the Great Ones, including Zoot's own particular heroes, like Pres and Bird. Even as a teenager, he soon earned the respect of fellow musicians, old and new. (Art Pepper, for instance, a contemporary of Sims', always ranked his fellow Californian, together with Lester Young, as his first principal influences.) Sadly, too, Sims would have to go through some of the less salubrious side-roads that so comprehensively affected the private lives of so many committed young jazzers who emerged from the Forties.

Zoot never was an innovator on his chosen instruments – tenor was his main-man, although he also handled alto, baritone and soprano with a natural-born skill. In fact, his mellifluous work on the latter – which he started playing full-time in the early Seventies, and used as a most worthy double to his beloved tenor, right to the end – was a

constant delight. Moreover, in the light of all the sopranos who appeared during the last decade, it was something of an extra bonus that he did not feel obliged to become yet another Trane clone – even though he'd respected John's playing, both on tenor and soprano.

BACKBONE OF JAZZ

As an aspiring jazz musician, Zoot Sims graduated through the big bands – Ken Baker (1941), Bobby Sherwood ('42-'43), Sonny Dunham, Bob Astor ('43), Goodman ('44, then again in '46, the interim period being spent as a guest of Uncle Sam), and Herman ('47-'49). It was with the latter – the legendary Second Herd/Four Brothers band – that he became a truly international name. Further big-band experience came through periods with Kenton ('53 – the best that Stan the Man ever fronted) and, much later, Mulligan's exceptional Concert Jazz Band ('60, and occasionally thereafter).

But it's as a small-group player that most of Zoot's finest work is best remembered. Earlier, it was Sid Catlett ('44), Bill Harris ('46), the Mulligan Sextet ('55-'56). Later, it was to be a mutually stimulating, long-lasting, on-off partnership with Al Cohn which we'll remember as fondly as anything in which he was involved. Which included tours with packages such as JATP, Jazz At Carnegie Hall, et al – not to mention gigs unlimited as a solo.

Zoot left us much too early, at just under sixty. Thank God, though, that during his multi-varied career he didn't go exactly unrecorded. The following gems are a miserably small representation of an impressive list of recordings, both under his own name, as well as with countless other individual musicians

and bands; unfortunately, lack of space precludes a more comprehensive listing. Zoot Sims may not have been an innovator, then, but when all is said and done he's the kind of backbone-of-jazz-history performer we can ill-afford to be without, at any time.

If it'll probably take much longer than this to understand fully just how much most of us really miss him.

Stan Britt

Selected discography

- ... & The Gershwin Brothers (Pablo)
- ... Sorpiano Sax (Pablo)
- 'Passion Flower'; Zoot Sims Plays Duke Ellington (Pablo Today)
- Hawthorne Nights (Pablo)
- Quarrel There (Pablo)
- Zootcase (Prestige, 2xLPs)
- Body & Soul (w/Al Cohn) (Muse)
- Motoring Along (w/Al Cohn) (Sonet)
- Revelation (w/Gerry Mulligan) (Blue Note)
- Gerry Mulligan & The Concert Jazz Band Live (Verve, 2xLPs)
- Presenting The Gerry Mulligan Sextet (EmArcy)
- The Brothers (w/Stan Getz, Al Cohn, Brew Moore, Allen Eager) (Xira)
- On A Misty Night (w/John Coltrane, Hank Mobley, Al Cohn) (Prestige)
- The Kenton Era (Creative World)
- Woody Herman's 2nd Herd/Live 1948, Vols 1,2 (Raritone)
- Woody Herman & The Four Brothers Live (Queen-Disc)
- Base & Zoot (Pablo)
- Joe & Zoot (w/Joe Venuti) (Vogue, 2xLPs)
- Down Home (Affinity)
- Blues For 2 (w/Joe Pass) (Pablo)
- Zoot Plays Alto, Tenor & Baritone (Jasmine)
- ... With Al Cohn – Richie Kamuca Sextet/Bob Brookmeyer Quintet (Pumpkin)



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L.A. Goffe meets

**the man who's
unmasked the**

Lone Ranger.





GIL SCOTT-HERON

a moving target

NO ONE can do everything, but everyone can do something. And for the past sixteen years, Gil Scott-Heron, the most consistent political commentator in popular music, has done more than just something.

In those sixteen years Scott-Heron has put to vinyl – on more than fifteen albums – a diverse list of social and political issues ranging from the re-emergence of the Ku Klux Klan to Mexican illegal aliens, drug abuse, the Watergate conspiracy, the struggle of "Solidarnosc" in Poland, and Reagan-watching in the Eighties.

His songs have become anthems against nuclear waste ("Shut 'em Down"), apartheid ("Johannesburg"), alcoholism ("The Bottle"); and one was even used as the summation for the defence in the 1983 US Federal prosecution of the Black Liberation Army and the Republic of New Afrika¹ on charges of racketeering, conspiracy, and murder. Scott-Heron's "Liberation Song" – which featured a saxophone solo by Bilal Sunni Ali, a former Scott-Heron sideman, and the most wanted man in America in 1982 – helped to secure Sunni Ali's acquittal and also made legal history.

"I believe this is the first time that I have known of using a rock record to conclude the summation in a federal trial," Judge O'Neill said.

Scott-Heron's uncompromising stance has afforded him a small, dedicated following, and the briefest of commercial success, notably with "B-Movie" in 1982, "Johannesburg" in 1976, and the hugely popular "The Bottle", in 1973.

From its earliest beginnings as an elusive import record on the British/Northern Soul scene, "The Bottle" has established itself as one of the most popular underground club requests of the last decade. "The Bottle"'s instantly recognisable introduction – the almost drunken words, "Uno, Dos, Tres, Quatro" – announces the arrival of a frantic flute-propelled modern dance record that fires back at alcoholism, and still sounds fresh in 1985. "See that black boy over there, running

scared! His old man's got a problem and if it's a bad one/He's done pawned off everything, his old woman's wedding ring for the Bottle...".

Apart from his three "hits" over sixteen years, Gil Scott-Heron has remained a cause to commercialism and compromise, and a beacon, and a voice for progressive politics-in-music.

A tall, bearded, wiry man, possessing a deep warm voice, and an alternately warming or chilling gaze, he recalls one platform he supported that had achieved its sum – the granting of Dr Martin Luther King Jr's birthday as a national holiday in the US. He had been touring with Stevie Wonder in 1981, and a march on Washington DC had been planned by many concerned groups, to support the ratification of the holiday.

"While the march was a commitment to a national holiday for Dr King's birthday on the one hand, there was more happening than just that. A lot of younger people, in particular, were looking for an idea or a symbol to show their support for the movement in general."

"To show how important musicians can be to these struggles, the Black Caucus (a lobby of black senators and congressmen) had been lobbying for Dr King's birthday to become a national holiday for twelve years, then Stevie (Wonder) decided to do it and all of a sudden they had 150,000 people in Washington DC. That is an indication of how effective artists can be when they commit themselves to a given idea."

Scott-Heron explains further that his music, "or Stevie's, or Bob Marley's, or Fela's music will not necessarily be the straw that breaks the camel's back, but as long as we are all working in the same direction we will see some progress."

Gil Scott-Heron was born in Chicago in April 1949, and raised in Jackson, Tennessee, by his grandmother until the age of thirteen when he moved North to 17th Street and 9th Avenue, New York City. By the age of sixteen he had already begun playing music professionally with different groups around town, and by the age of twenty one had published two novels,



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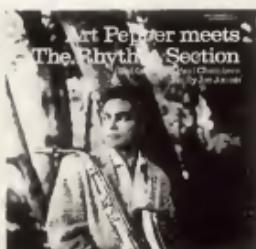
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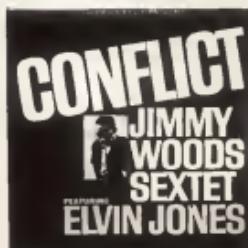
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The Vulture and *The Nigger Factory*, plus a collection of poems, *Small Talk At 125th And Lenox*.

Scott-Heron remarks that while he cannot look back and say which day in his life it was that he decided to play music and write poetry, "it was growing in me all of the time. I realised that the whole spectrum of my values fitted into a pattern, a symmetrical pattern that revolves around my community."

Between the music and the writing Scott-Heron went away to Lincoln University in Pennsylvania to do a Bachelor of Arts degree. In 1969, while at Lincoln, he met with a complementary spirit in Brian Jackson, a music student, and together they formed a group called Black And Blues. That group disbanded, but then in 1972 they formed The Midnight Band, which has survived in various forms up to the present, despite the departure of Jackson in 1980 to pursue his own musical directions. Scott-Heron describes himself and Jackson as "interpreters of the black experience". He adds, "We described that experience as 360 degrees, and whatever fell inside those 360 degrees was fair game for us to cover."

Scott-Heron has fulfilled his brief, and covered that experience with such lyrical, and musical eclecticism – sometimes latin rhythms, sometimes reggae one-drop, sometimes gliding acoustic jazz piano and Afro-inspired percussion – that it is often possible to find his albums scattered throughout the average record shop's "Jazz", "Soul", "Pop", and "Miscellaneous" sections. His many "spoken" songs also made him an important precursor of today's rap music, an art form which Scott-Heron aligns to the tradition of African griots and story-tellers.

He says that he simply tries to "develop and experiment with different ideas, trying all of the time to be as flexible as possible in allowing the atmosphere that we wanted a particular song to convey to dictate how it was arranged, and what the orchestration would be. All along we have been doing different things. First there were four vocalists, then there were Victor (Brown), Brian (Jackson) and myself doing the vocals with a couple of horns. Then there was a very rhythm-oriented Midnight Band with two percussionists. Then there was the phase with two female background vocalists. Now we are back to triple and quadruple horn arrangements with three vocalists."

RENAISSANCE MAN

Such willingness to experiment is not limited to music alone. In 1973, after receiving his Master of Arts degree from Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Scott-Heron taught Creative Writing at Federal City College in Washington DC when he was not recording or on the road.

"I've been playing music and writing for years. I have always felt that you put limits on yourself if you decide that you are going to do one thing or the other. Look at Langston Hughes, he was a columnist, playwright, editor, and lyricist, in essence a renaissance man."



NICK WHITE

"White people in America are looking for a John Wayne kind of character. They would have elected him if he was alive, but he wasn't. So they got the next best thing – another B-movie actor."

He admits, though, that he is not yet as comfortable with the different art forms as was Hughes. "I have not yet written a good play. But that does not mean that when I write that play that I will be a playwright as opposed to anything else. It simply means that it is something else that I like to do."

When Scott-Heron is not travelling his forty-plus weeks a year with The Midnight Band or recording, writing, or experimenting with new ideas, you'll find him at home with actress-wife, Brenda, and his five-year-old daughter, Gia Louise, or maybe shooting some basketball with a friend, World Champion basketball player, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar. He inherits his love of sport (and he travels with an up-to-date copy of *Sports Illustrated* under the toothpaste!) from his father, who had been a professional football player in both Jamaica and in Scotland.

At home, Scott-Heron also researches a lot of his songs by reading or re-reading a host of authors from Michael Crichton (*Westworld*, *The Andromeda Strain*) to Jean Toomer, Ed Bullins, or Countee Cullen and listening to Randy Weston, Miriam Makeba, or the Mighty Sparrow. He says of his pool of resources, "Instinctively and traditionally art has been a part of the lifeblood of any community. And for me this is all part of the different things that make up my life experience."

GRADUAL REVOLUTION

"Gil Scott-Heron", writes Audreen Ballard on the liner notes to the album *The Mind Of Gil'*

GIL SCOTT-HERON

Scott-Heron, "has spent most of his adult life unmasking the Lone Ranger." And while busy with the Lone Ranger, he's also turned his special talents to other such exotic figures as "King Richard" (Richard Nixon), "AuH2O" (Republican Senator Barry Goldwater), "Oatmeal Man" (Gerald Ford), "Skippy" (Jimmy Carter), and "Hollywood" alias "Reagun" alias President Ronald Reagan.

When asked why Reagan is so popular, Scott-Heron explains "White people in America are looking for a John Wayne kind of character. They would have elected him if he was alive, but he wasn't. So they got the next best thing – another B-movie actor."

And as to Reagan's second term forcing blacks and progressive groups to unite, he says, "Hope springs eternal. We have a whole lot of people complaining about the fact that nothing is being done, while they themselves are not doing anything. I've always felt that we lack an accurate interpretation of our circumstance in America. As soon as we begin to be more self-reliant, unity will be self-evident. You have to get your house together before you can deal with the block, and your block before you can deal with the community. We are living in an instant society, and when black people heard about revolution and didn't see it immediately they assumed that 'there isn't going to be one, after all' – while the truth about revolution is that it is a gradual process, and regardless of how many defeats you meet on the way to where you are going, you do not give up."

As an example Scott-Heron cites an incident from a time when he had been depressed about the future:

"I had been going through a patch where I thought that things were not coming together and, by chance, I had the opportunity to visit some pre-schools (supplementary and nursery school) where I saw our younger people being taught who we are, and being taught things that are significant to our existence, the things we are anxious to see them learn because our young folks will have the key tomorrow."

Gil Scott-Heron has distributed as much information as possible, in as direct a fashion as possible, through books, articles, plays, poems, songs, and music.

No one can do everything, but Gil Scott-Heron has done something.

Notes

1. The Black Liberation Army was an offshoot of the Black Panthers; the Republic of New Afrika was an organisation dedicated to the ceding of five southern states to the African nation in America.

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- Winter In America (Strata East)
- The First Minute Of A New Day (Anista)
- From South Africa To South Carolina (Anista)
- The Mind Of Gil Scott-Heron (Anista)
- Reflections (Anista)
- Moving Target (Anista)

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SURPRISINGLY, THIS is the first UK edition in fifteen years of the world-famous reference book by our own John Chilton. Yes, that's the same John Chilton who leads the band behind George Melly, but who also wrote the excellent *Teach Yourself Jazz* and several other books and, incidentally, was one of the first independent observers to make encouraging noises about *The Wire* a couple of years ago.

The first thing to note is that this is strictly a biographical dictionary, not a critical one. In the words of Chilton's introduction, "I have refrained from inflicting my assessments of the musicians' skills on the reader" (or that, you can always go to the *Teach Yourself* volume). What you do get, however, are nearly 1200 life-histories which are more detailed and more accurate than in any other reference work on jazz.

The next important thing, though, is that the beneficiaries of this research are only those musicians with birthdates before 1920 and "born or raised in the USA", a reasonable enough restriction for the period concerned. If your tastes at the moment are exclusively



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(Jazz Masters Series, Spellmount, Tunbridge Wells, £3.95 each)

THE LATEST titles in this series of slim biographies preserve more of the good than the bad features of previous titles. The format remains the same, and their usefulness lies in straightforward career cutlines and detailed selective discographies. All four authors write with commitment about musicians they admire. The volumes on Young and Hawkins are particularly welcome as there is currently no easily available monograph on the career of either of these vital figures.

But some doubts remain in each case. Limitations of space inevitably restrict authors, but the scope of each book remains narrow and their range of sources limited. All four are more than adequate in assembling the principal lore and received wisdom concerning each musician, revealing the shibboleths which newcomers need to know to be admitted to the community of jazz fans. But, on the whole, they don't convey articulated new readings. The authors rely on published sources a good deal, alongside their extensive knowledge of music on record, but they remain at a distance from their subjects. There is overdependence on some well-worn items: Mary Lou Williams' story of the cutting contest between Hawkins and the Kansas City tenor players is rehearsed at length by both Gelly and James.

The limitations of a biographical approach are felt most severely in Burnett James' study of Hawkins. As he acknowledges, the Hawk was a difficult man to pin down, and while Lester Young's tormented, and well-documented, personal life had considerable bearing on his career, the same cannot be said of Hawkins. Reading James' book, it's as though the reader is pursuing Hawkins frantically from engagement to engagement, from recording session to recording session,

always just too far behind to hear him playing. The lack of detailed musical analysis which pervades the series (with one or two exceptions, including Palmer's companion of performances by Peterson and Tatum) is at its most frustrating here. It is also a pity that Burnett James has so little to say about the major series of recordings which Hawkins made in the late Fifties with leading innovators including Monk, Coltrane and Rollins. They show that his conception never ceased to develop – the late Hawkins was no mere reflection of the pioneer of the Twenties and early Thirties or the mature artist of the 1939 "Body And Soul".

Dave Gelly's Lester Young is most stimulating in asserting the case of serious consideration of the post-1945 recordings. He dismisses the conventional view that the army alone broke Lester's spirit, and demonstrates both that the seeds of decline were present earlier, and that there were nevertheless many excellent sessions after 1945.

Alun Morgan has the problem of dealing with a figure whose influence was crucial and radical in the Thirties but, through no fault of Basie's, rather conservative after the be-bop era as he was appropriated as a model for mainstream and big band jazz. The later years of Basie's career need to be dealt with in terms of the political economy of the entertainment industry. They are not to be appraised through the study of great recordings and innovative performances as is the more heroic early part of his career.

For all Richard Palmer's assertions to the contrary, the same is surely even more true of the remarkable commercial success of Oscar Peterson and his business partnership with Norman Granz. The reason why Peterson has made millions whereas Bud Powell didn't, for example, isn't only to be explained in terms of the former's greater personal stability, and certainly isn't an index of their relative musical significance.

In praising Peterson, Richard Palmer makes use of an unusual word, writing that "as long as there is any catholicity in jazz, Oscar Peterson will continue to be a favourite accompanist". This may be just the word to encapsulate what many critics have been saying about Peterson for years. His is, after all, a great technique, but Richard Palmer fails to convince that it has found a core of ideas to apply itself to.

Jeremy Crump

post-Parker (and even he was born in 1920) you might consider this less than relevant. But anyone whose tastes extend even a little further back will find authoritative run-downs on such pre-1920 entrants as Blakey, Gillespie, Monk, Herbie Nichols and Sonny Blount aka Sun Ra. I've no idea why George Shearing is here, for he was nearly thirty before he set foot in the States, but he is the only exception I can find to Chilton's self-imposed parameters. Likewise you have to go through the entire volume with a fine-tooth comb to discover anything that could be called an error.

The chronological concentration enables an in-depth coverage of the period Chilton is best at (as opposed to Leonard Feather, whose strengths are in bebop and beyond), and the recent increases in entries carrying a death-date might give the impression there's no work left to be done. But the author is nothing if not a perfectionist, and I've no doubt there'll be added information and additional entries when it's time for another revision in, say, ten years. Meanwhile, this edition presents state-of-the-art biographical research, and no jazz-loving household should be without it.

Brian Priestley





The title for COMPOSITION 113



One of the most brilliant and original composer-instrumentalists of the age, ANTHONY BRAXTON draws on colour, shape, astrology, opera and ritual to create a new musical language that will help bring about world change.

Graham Lock investigates the incredible case of the man who's planning a work for 100 orchestras linked by satellite, yet can't afford to pay his phone bill.

let 100 orchestras blow

I. WHERE TO BEGIN?

ONCE UPON a time there was a man who loved music...

In 1978 Arista Records released a three-LP boxed set of Anthony Braxton's *For Four Orchestras*.¹ Braxton explains in the accompanying booklet that this composition is the first of a multi-orchestral series (Series A) that will include compositions for four orchestras and tape, six orchestras, ten orchestras, and 100 orchestras "in four different cities connected by satellite and television systems". There will also be, he says, a multi-orchestral Series B – of pieces linking orchestras on three planets, five planets, in different star systems and in different galaxies!

For Anthony Braxton, it seems, not even the sky is the limit.

When I first read those notes, I felt dazed/inspired/sceptical. They seemed like the babblings of a madman; yet the vision – its audacity, its optimism – proved very appealing: a paradigm of world, even intergalactic, harmony; the New Music of the spheres. When I met Anthony Braxton, in October 1984, I was eager to learn the current state of Series A, originally scheduled for completion by 1985.

"Well, it's proceeding, but at a slower pace than I had originally laid out. I've almost finished the piece for five orchestras and magnetic tape."

Braxton peers at me intently through his spectacles. I'm too daunted to ask if he doesn't mean four orchestras and tape; I just plough ahead.

And the piece for 100 orchestras, I ask, the climax of Series A?

"I'm probably four or five years away from that." He gives a small sigh, a distracted frown.

It seems, I venture, an awful lot of work.

Braxton smiles. "Oh, I don't mind the work. It's really a question of time and learning; there's always so much more to learn. So," he pulls a wry face, "I'm behind schedule in everything else, I might as well be behind schedule in my multi-orchestral work. Being behind schedule is, ah, nothing new to me."

Time and learning may affect the writing of such works, but it is time and money which determine their performance. The recording of *For Four Orchestras* involved 160 musicians and, according to producer Michael Cuscuna, required over 700 separate splices: special scores had to be printed for the musicians since the work uses colour and shape as part of its notation system. Braxton told *Cadence* magazine that he'd gone 25,000 dollars into debt to pay for the scores, and, he claimed, Arista had deleted the records within eight months of release once they realised it wasn't

a "jazz" piece.²

In our own conversation, he also touches on this question of classification.

"I have been attacked by the jazz world for not being... loyal... probably that would be the real word... to what jazz is. And they're correct. And, of course, I've been attacked by the classical world for... what makes you think you can play classical music, nigger?"

"So if it gets to be, does he swing? Is the music hot or cold?" He gives a little shrug of impatience. "Those questions have followed me around."

Your desire to integrate musical cultures has left you isolated?

"I thank you could say that," Braxton laughs. "I'd say there would maybe be three people on the planet who can relate to it."

Yet his vision of a world, or "composite", music is neither unique nor new. Charles Mingus and Ornette Coleman, for example, composed "classical" works; while interest in multi-orchestralism, in cultural synthesis, is a common feature of much modern music, from Sun Ra to Richard Teitelbaum to Karlheinz Stockhausen.

The roots of Braxton's musical leanings go beyond these comparisons, perhaps, back to his childhood, to the love of marches and parade music he recounts in his notes to *For Four Orchestras*, where he says that the sights and sounds of different ensembles making music in the same physical space have always excited his imagination: "It is as if the whole universe were swallowed up – leaving us in a sea of music and colour."

Such imaginative breadth is one of Braxton's most striking qualities. In person, he exudes a similar air of intellectual thirst, plus a palpable excitement about music. He talks quickly, intently, explaining the history behind his answer to each question, spinning in examples and related points, and springing it all with abrupt flashes of self-deprecatory wit. The tape transcription runs to over 10,000 words; to squeeze these into a 4,000 word article has meant drastic editing. So I haven't tried to explore all of Braxton's musical terrain, simply indicate major areas of interest; for the finer detail, his own sleep-notes, though complex at first glance, are admirably thorough. He's an ideal, and inspiring, interviewee: a man who lives, breathes and dreams music, yet is keenly aware of, and keen to discuss, many of the other forms of "information" (his terminology can be a little idiosyncratic) that are available on the planet – from African politics to the new feminist astrology. "I'm just interested in being here," he avers at one point, "I want to participate." And it's no bullshit, as photographer Nick White mutters admiringly after the interview, "that's the first musician I've met who didn't tell a single anecdote!"

5-54

603

2-F

286

Braxton's title for his piece for 100 orchestras (the left-hand shape is coloured dark red).

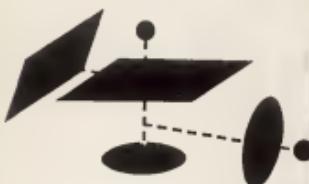


The title for COMPOSITION 105 A (the human, hand and bottom shapes are green, the triangle orange, the circles brown).



The title to FOR TRIO (the main shape is brown, the others brown, green and purple).

B-40



M23-6K

"Given structures will make certain things happen. That's what structure is. It doesn't have anything to do with me telling somebody what to feel."

II. HOW TO PROCEED?

ANTHONY BRAXTON was born in Chicago in 1945. As a young man, his fondness for philosophy, mathematics and chess, plus a love of music that encompassed Fifties' doowop, Paul Desmond and John Coltrane, made him something of a misfit. But when old college chum Roscoe Mitchell introduced him to Chicago's newly-formed Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians in 1966, Braxton found the community of like spirits he was looking for. ("I was tired of feeling like I was crazy," as he told Michael Ullman).³

His debut LP, *Three Compositions Of The New Jazz*, featuring AACM colleagues LeRoy Jenkins, Leo Smith and Muhal Richard Abrams, bears many of the hallmarks of the new Chicago music: the use of voice and "little instruments"; the kaleidoscope feel of sounds floating in space; the emphasis on the players' multi-instrumentalism (a facet which Braxton has continued to develop, performing on most of the saxophone and clarinet families as well as piano and percussion). But it was his second LP, the 1969 double *For Alto*, which created a real stir – the first album of solo saxophone music ever released. Track dedications to John Cage and Cecil Taylor indicated the parameters that Braxton was working to.

"In the middle Sixties," he recalls, "the challenge for me was to participate in the extended improvisation that was taking place, as related to the explorations of Coltrane and Taylor, and integrate that into the structural dynamics that were exciting me from the post-Webern continuum, especially the work of Stockhausen and John Cage. Those were the factors that established my whole involvement in music."

To this end, Braxton developed his system of "conceptual grafting" – a method of "isolating various factors as a means to build a music from particular parts" which he likened to "painting a picture with only blue or with only green, or better still with mostly blue but with isolated touches of red and brown".⁴

Conceptual grafting, he tells me, also began as an alternative to serialism, which had not attracted him. "Rather I found myself moving, or vibrating, towards the world of colour and shape. At the time I didn't understand it all myself; it was, like, how to create a language that respected the musics that were 'calling' to me. I began to break down phrase construction variables with regard to material properties, functional properties, language properties, and use that as a basis to create improvised music – then rechannel that into the compositional process. And the foundation of my music, the processes of my music, is the language music material that I've gathered through conceptual grafting."

For Alto may have caused a stir in 1969, but it made no fortunes. "We were starving in Chicago," Braxton told Kenneth Ansell, "we were dying."⁵ So Braxton, Jenkins, and Smith, trading as the Creative Construction Company, lit out for Paris, just weeks after the Art Ensemble Of Chicago had made the same move. But unlike the AEC, who were a hit in France, the CCC found their music as little appreciated in Europe as in the USA. Disillusioned, Braxton returned home, settling in New York with Ornette Coleman. But still unable to get his work performed, he gave up music and spent a year as a chess hustler. "Playing chess is just like creating music," he once said. "There is this whole universe and there are laws to this universe ... it's a just universe. It's wonderful, so exciting."⁶

Then, via a CCC reunion gig and a brief tour with Musica Electronica Viva, Braxton slipped

back into music; and became a part of Circle with Chick Corea, Dave Holland and Barry Altschul. That group split after a year, but Holland and Altschul stayed with Braxton and, together with either trumpeter Kenny Wheeler or trombonist George Lewis, comprised his regular quartet for the next five years.

Times remained tough; so much so that in 1974 Braxton sardonically dedicated his *In The Tradition LP* to "the Roche Pharmaceutical Company". 1974, though, also brought a deal with Arista, and over the next eight years a selection of his work – albeit just a handful of leaves from a forest of material – was regularly released on record. For the first time, the astonishing scope of Braxton's sound explorations became clear: as well as the quartet and multi-orchestral music, there were graceful duets with Muhal Richard Abrams, the brilliant big-band wnbng of *Creative Music Orchestra*, 1976, a fruitful synthesis of AACM principles and Braxton's "modular notation" on *For Trio*, and the "ceremonial" composition *For Two Pianos*. In addition, scattered over his other Arista LPs, were curious, exciting instrumental combinations – a saxophone quartet, a tuba ensemble, a solo piece for contrabass clarinet. And, in the midst of this diversity, Braxton's alto still blew diamond hard, natural successor to the great post-war alto tradition of Parker, Coleman, Dolphy.

"I found myself moving, or vibrating, towards the world of colour and shape."

In the Seventies, Braxton also pursued his interest in improvisation with the European musicians of the various Company and Globe Unity groups, notably with guitarist Derek Bailey on the *Live At Wigmore* and *Royal* LPs. He also recorded several live LPs for Moers' Ring; while in the late Seventies/early Eighties the Swiss hat Hut label released some superb Braxton material, including duets with Max Roach and Richard Teitelbaum and the quartet albums *Performance 9/1/79* and *Composition 9/8*.

However, Braxton remains largely unhonoured in his own country and, since the demise of his Arista contract, there seems little immediate hope of his larger-scale works being recorded. His aim now is to issue his records and his writings himself (he's already completed three books on the aesthetic principles of his music), but lack of money prevents him from realising this dream (in fact, I later hear a report that Braxton can't even afford to pay his phone bill!). Undaunted, he takes heart from the tradition of stubborn independence pioneered by the likes of Harry Partch and Sun Ra.

"As I get older, I look to individuals like Sun Ra to get a better sense of my life and where I'm going. He's developed a body of musics that will help people on the planet for as long as this time cycle is operative. I draw my strength from people like him or Warne Marsh or Evan Parker or Alberta Hunter, who's just passed, because it really is about a life's commitment."

III. WHAT GOES WHERE?

DOES HE swing? Is the music hot, cold or sky-blue pink?

Braxton's work has often been stigmatized as "dry", "over-intellectual". This is a cloth-

eared nonsense. His work straddles a gamut of styles and emotional shadings, from madcap bebop to stomping, witty marches – he even does a version of "Maple Leaf Rag" that dances with affection and charm. His more abstract music too ranges right across the emotional spectrum; there's the snarling attack of "For John Cage", the serenity of "Nickie".

Of course, there is a weighty intellectual content to his music, and Braxton has outlined his musical philosophy in a series of detailed liner notes (and been criticised again for his pains). Curiously, though, these notes address only the structural and technical properties of the music, never its emotional dimension. Why this anomaly? I ask.

"Um... well..." For a moment Braxton looks stumped. "I never talk about feeling, or haven't – up until 1983 or so – tried to address the emotional aspects of the music because it seemed to me that the significance of improvised music – as practised in the trans-African continuum and as related to affinity dynamics and affinity insights – is for each person to find his or her own relationship with 'doing', to be as true as you can be to yourself."

There are, says Braxton, three levels to this relationship, what he calls the "degrees of affinity insights": the third degree, "for the individual, having to do with self-realisation"; the second degree, "for the community"; and the first degree, "having to do with establishing a relationship with God, say, or whatever the higher forces would be for the person reading this article".

He concludes: "My fascination up until 1981, '82, had been with the concept of structure, to look into the reality of structure and what it poses for the dynamics of music, the understanding being that given structures will make certain things happen. That's what structure is. It doesn't have anything to do with me telling somebody what to feel."

Both Braxton's use of conceptual grafting and his emphasis on structure have recently taken a back seat to his new interest in the worlds of opera, myth and ritual. We'll come back to that later. Just now there's a second aspect of his existing opera I want to look at – his use of colour and shape. This again has been mooted as proof of Braxton's "eccentricity", but there are plenty of comparable instances in modern music, from Messiaen's belief that every chord corresponds to a precise mixture of colours to Sam Rivers' experience of "playing paintings" in a Boston art gallery?

(Braxton himself attributes his knowledge of the inter-relationship between music and colour to "The Ancients", by which he means the early cultures of Egypt, Sumaria and Greece. His research into past musical theories, as part of his own "musical tendency towards restructuring", has led him to develop, in his books on aesthetics, a perspective he calls the Triaxium – "which is looking at the present with respect to the past as a basis to the future".)

To return to my original query, how does he use colour? Is it a learned language, taught to the players, or something intuitive?

"It's more of an intuitive relationship, but it depends on the composition... let me go back a little, I'm a Gemini and the sound that rules Gemini is F-sharp, and the colour that rules F-sharp is yellow. There's a gesture, a movement, that corresponds to these same variables. F-sharp also rules the neck and shoulders, that part of the body. Now, sooner or later, the thrust of Western technology will re-integrate some of these things again – for instance, the sound of F has been used to

"If everything proceeds as it is, I think Black people will be totally annihilated."



NICK WHITE

help people with mental problems. But there is so much more to this, what I call composite information, once it's resolidified properly."

"I've used colour as a subjective interpretation device in improvisation and in some notated structures. Colour in that context can be equated to velocity, or feeling, the perceived emotional dynamics of the music. I hope in the future to go even farther with that because, as I said, we're only on the surface of what transformational creativity could be about."

I know you're a student of astrology. Can you explain the connections, if any, between astrology and your music?

Braxton's normally quizzical expression deepens to a frown of uncertainty. "Your question is complex, I'm not sure how to deal with it. For instance, some of the earlier works... in Composition 3, say, I used astrological devices in terms of, like, if you were a Gemini then you'd have to play your note in given places. Stockhausen has a piece, I think, which uses characters from the Zodiac, and I haven't used astrology like that... but that's an interesting idea... develop characters from astrology, mmm." His eyes light up. "I'm enjoying this interview more and more. Next question!"

IV. WHERE TO NEXT?

IN THE Eighties, Braxton's hope of building a composite, transformational music that will help bring about world change has led him to explore opera, theatre, myth, ritual. For Two Planes and Composition 96 (for orchestra and four slide projectors) began this process, and recently he has embarked on a series of twelve operas, entitled Triflum. His latest LP release, Composition 713 (premiered at Actual 84) is a sound drama set on a night train in North Africa. The solo performer enacts – on soprano saxophone – a desperate argument between six hooded figures, representing different musical-cum-character traits, each of whom tries to win over the silent hero, "Ojuwan (the believer)".

So what's it all about? What are Braxton's objectives in this new area of music?

"Objectives?" He muses. "Well, I've been trying to establish philosophical bases, that is a philosophical discipline of associations, I've been trying to establish a music system and, thirdly, a mystical and vibration system..."

But Ojuwan, the operas – how do they fit in?

"Ojuwan is one of a series of characters I've been developing to generate dialogues for the operas, and these characters will be an affirmation of my philosophical viewpoint and express, in fantasy form, some of the association schematics that are related to the Triaxium aesthetic information I'm trying to build. So... the concept of affinity dynamics is enacted, in ritual form, in the Triflum operas."

Er, yes... (Just hang on in there, I tell myself.)

Allied to this, continues Braxton, will be a new emphasis on character improvisation – "improvisation that will begin to deal with the concept of intention, of calibrating meaning. Composition 713 is the first of a series of situation improvisations that will attempt to explore intention, dialogue, interchange on that level."

Surely, I say, the more you move into opera and theatre, the more multi-faceted your work becomes, the harder it will be to get it performed or recorded?

"But I'm not getting anything out anyway," Braxton shrugs. "I don't have to worry about that, I specialize in not getting projects out."

isn't it very frustrating never to hear your music?

"Oh, it's frustrating," Braxton raises his eyebrows, "but it's not as frustrating as what some of the poor people on this planet are dealing with, or what the miners in this country are dealing with, or the starvation that's taking place in Africa . . . well, all over the planet, I don't mean to talk only of the plight of African peoples. But I do see the systematic annihilation of, uh, non-white people looming; if everything proceeds as it is, I think Black people will be totally annihilated.

"So the poverty that I'm dealing with is part of a luxury, because I've been fortunate enough to be involved in something that I love." He leans forward intently. "I love it so much, I'll do it whether anybody cares or not." But if music is a force for world change, I protest, it's vital that it be performed.

"Oh yes," Braxton looks surprised, "but I don't want to confuse me with music. I'm just one person on this planet; whether Anthony Braxton succeeds or not isn't even the question. We have to find a way to bring people back to true information, the kind that can really help in being on this planet, that's where music is important, but it isn't dependent on any one person. A lot of creative people have gone down the tubes into poverty — if that's my fate, I'm not unique.

"I'm a father too. My wife and I have three children, so there's the added factor of supporting my family. It, in the final analysis, I have to go and drive a taxi or something, that's what I'll have to do. And many jazz musicians . . . Coltrane never got to fifty years old, Booker Little . . . so I'm fortunate to be on the planet!"

V. HOW WILL IT END?

IN HIS book *The Rebel*, Albert Camus writes of a prisoner-of-war in Siberia, starved and frozen, who built himself a silent piano with wooden keys and "in the most abject misery, perpetually surrounded by a ragged mob, he composed a strange music which was audible to him alone." For Camus, that unheard music, in the midst of "crime and folly", carried the echo of human greatness.

In the end, I have to ask:

Do you really think you'll ever hear your operas or your piece for 100 orchestras?

Braxton chuckles. "At this point, I'll be very interested to hear some string quartets that I wrote maybe ten years ago. I've become very, ah, non-selective in these matters. I'll just write my music, and if somebody performs it, I'll be happy. If they don't perform it, I'll be happy to, maybe once a month, sneak downstairs to the basement and look at the score, and I'll imagine — yeah! It would've gone like this, then this would've happened . . . I mean, you take what you can get."

Blake said "The Imagination is not a State: it is the Human Existence itself."

Long live Anthony Braxton.

Notes

1. Braxton's actual title for this work, as for most of his works, comprises a diagram-cum-illustration which codifies the musical processes used in the composition.

2. Cadence, Vol. 10, No. 3, March 1984.

3. Michael Ullman, *Jazz Lives* (Pergree Books, 1982), p. 208.

4. Liner notes to Alto Saxophone Improvisations, 1979 (Anista).

5. Impetus 6, 1977.

6. Ullman, op. cit., p. 202.

7. Ullman, op. cit., p. 134.

Essential listening

SOLO

For Alto (Delmark, 1969)

Saxophone Improvisations Series F (America, early '70s)

Alto Saxophone Improvisations, 1979 (Anista)

Composition 113 (Sound Aspects, 1984) DUO

Royal, Volume One (Incus, 1984/recorded

1974) w. Derek Bailey

Duelo, 1978 (Anista) w. Muhal Richard Abrams

Birth And Rebirth (Black Saint, 1978) w. Max Roach

One In Two, Two In One (hat Hut, 1979) w. Max Roach

Open Aspects '82 (hat Art) w. Richard Teitelbaum

TRIO

For Trio (Anista, 1978)

QUARTET

Live At Moers Festival (Ring, 1974)

Performance 9/1/79 (hat Hut)

Composition 98 (hat Art, 1981)

Six Compositions (Anilles, 1981)

Four Compositions (Black Saint, 1983)

ORCHESTRA

Creative Orchestra Music, 1976 (Anista)

MULTI-ORCHESTRA

For Four Orchestras (Anista, 1978)

VARIOUS

The Complete Braxton '71 (Freedom/Anista)

New York, Fall 1974 (Anista)

The Montreux/Berlin Concerts (Anista, 1977)

For Two Pianos (Anista, 1982)



THE WIRE'S WHERE GUIDE

■ This month our roving consumer Steve Lewis visits Hereford and the North West.

PRESTON

The seat of Lancashire's government and the biggest town in the county outside the Manchester/Liverpool conurbations. All well and good but you'll have a hard time finding any Omette albums. Only two shops stock any sort of jazz. One was better as Brady's but now it's an HMV shop, Market Place. A meagre collection of mostly re-releases, quite a few Riverside, Preston and Blue Note through

Ames Fishergate Walk, is the other, one of a chain fairly ubiquitous in the North West but unknown, as far as I'm aware, elsewhere. The better of the two probably, slightly larger stock, wider variety and they'll play records for you. Otherwise much of a muckness. Depressing really, especially when you realise that Preston does pretty well compared to most towns, where you'd only have the 'Nostalgia' sections of W. H. Smith's and Boots to choose from.

The World Shop, Fox St, isn't a jazz shop, it's not even a record shop. It sells mostly decorative products made by co-operatives in the Third World. It does however carry a tiny stock (maybe fifty albums) of records from Asia, South America and Africa. In the whole of the North West only Probe in Liverpool have anything like this.

KENDAL

Smyth's Records, 123/5 Highgate, stocks some blues and folk as well as the usual pop

and rock but, remarkably, jazz provides the largest share of its turnover. "We're not a city centre shop," says manager Bob Bush, "we sell mostly Forties and Fifties stuff. Absolutely no demand for anything current." How can you spot "rural" jazz then? Well, a higher proportion of British jazz certainly, of "name" trad and swing artists too, and nothing more modern than Tubby Hayes apart from an interesting sprinkling of bankrupt stock (not all of it the ubiquitous *I Grandi Del Jazz!*).

Customers come from far and wide apparently, including a regular from Nottingham! (If you're reading, sir, there'll be some information of particular interest to you in a few issues time.) There's a second shop in Windermere, Ash St, too, with much the same kind of stock so you'll be able to browse through some decent records on your next Lakeland holiday.

BLACKPOOL

If you prefer the seaside you may have to forgo foraging for the duration. There are only two shops with any jazz and what they have is small though strangely complementary. **Melody House**, 53 Bond St, ranges from Louis to Glenn with a little Balk/Barber for good measure. **Record & Cassette Centre**, 18 South Shore Market, on the other hand starts with Charlie Parker, moves along a thin blue line of Blakey and winds up with half a dozen or so of the latest ECM releases. Between

them the two shops stock no more than a few hundred records.

HEREFORD

The Outback, Maylord St, is a nice whoremall record shop. The very opposite of the MacDonald-think of Virgin and HMV. It's a shame then that it's presently running down its jazz section. In the whole of Hereford there were only two regular customers. Shame on you Hereford! Nevertheless, it still has a strong blues section and an excellent stock of ethnic records. The best range of African, Middle and Far Eastern recordings I've yet come across, in fact. This shop, like The World in Preston, may seem to be on the fringes of my brief, but if you think it's irrelevant maybe you should think again about where jazz came from and where it's going to (World Music, Stephen Micus, Don Cherry . . .) Whether you agree or not, it's worth a detour if you're passing through, just to see the extraordinary price drawers in which the stock is displayed!

Music Market, High Town, is the local HMV clone. It has a reasonable jazz stock, better anyway than The Outback for all its Habitat décor, with a strong bias against anything pre-bebop. The branch in Worcester, Broad St, has a broadly similar range with perhaps rather more from each artist's repertoire. And that, I'm afraid, is all there is to say about Worcester.

Al Di Meola

Cielo e Terra



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TERJE RYPDAL/Worl ds - 8254254/1
EBE RHARD WEBE R/Worl ds - 8254255/1

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KEITH JARRETT/Eyes Of The Heart		7104658 mp
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ON THE RECORD

Black Lion & Blue Note



BLACK LION ROARS BACK

ONE OF the most cheering developments this year has been the re-emergence of Black Lion Records, one of the most prolific of British independent jazz labels, following a new distribution deal with Counterpoint Distribution. From its inception in 1971, Black Lion released recordings by major American musicians and made available vintage material (particularly by Art Tatum), using transcriptions and rare seventy-eights as source as well as items from the Sunset label.

Later, as recording visiting Americans became more common in Europe, Black Lion turned attention to British artists, and soon built up a comprehensive catalogue of domestic jazz. But distribution is always a problem for an independent label. Black Lion started life with Polydor, and then moved to the now-defunct Transatlantic operation. Other less successful liaisons led to a period of inactivity, in this country at least, and only now has the label come bouncing back.

The man behind Black Lion is Alan Bates. His musical involvement began when working in the States for the Buena Vista organisation, which handles distribution of Disney records –

"including those by Mickey Mouse, would you believe?" reflects Alan. It was here that Bates had the chance to work for Dick Bock, the man behind the Pacific Jazz label, helping with the export side. This led to contacts with other independents, including Bill Grauer of Riverside Records, and the formation of Interdisc, an organisation which handled distribution of all independent jazz labels, except Blue Note, in Europe. Bates was appointed manager of Interdisc, which distributed Pacific Jazz, Prestige and Riverside. Later, Interdisc agreed a deal with Philips, who were seeking to fill the massive gap in their catalogue caused by U S Columbia setting up in Europe as CBS. In 1964, Bates began his own production company, Jazzaart, and leased the resulting records to Fontana – many of these appeared as that label's Jazz Life series.

The winds of corporate change had another effect on Alan: "Deutsche Grammophon were keen to expand, and part of the new image was Polydor Records – I was fortunate to get a job as Marketing Manager. It did mean that my jazz activity was negligible, though, and after four years, I thought – why not do it myself."

Hence in 1971 Black Lion records came about. "The name comes from a pub in Black Lion Lane...".

FROM SUN RA TO SUNSET

The diversity of the records that followed

meant that the label was not pigeon-holed in its stylistic approach. Consider the recordings of Americans whilst in Europe – several superb sessions of Bud Powell, including a trio date that includes a haunting "Blues For Bouffemont", and a session from the Essen Jazz Festival where Coleman Hawkins joins the pianist for four numbers; Ben Webster was well represented, with a studio session and three volumes of recordings from the Jazzhouse Montmartre, whilst Dexter Gordon's sets at the same venue were taped. Pianist Hampton Hawes undertook a world tour during 1968, and whilst in Europe recorded for Black Lion, and later recorded a club session which produced two albums. Other pianists recorded included Teddy Wilson and Earl Hines, whilst Black Lion had the distinction of recording the final trio and solo recordings of Thelonious Monk, during his visit here in 1971 with the Giants of Jazz package (even if no one knew that is what they would turn out to be). One of the more meaningful albums by Sun Ra appeared on Black Lion, whilst an offshoot, Freedom, brought forth albums by Archie Shepp – including two outstanding sessions from the 1975 Montreux Jazz Festival – and a superb set by Cecil Taylor under the title *Silent Tongues* which won remarkable acclaim by Taylor's standards, his records usually being misunderstood by most. And of course, Black Lion used its Sunset masters to produce



In this month's two-part section, Greg Murphy hails the return of Black Lion Records and Keith Shadwick checks the latest Blue Note reissues.



intriguing vintage albums, and helped guitars! Barney Kessel back into the lime-light with a series of recordings in 1968.

DUKE AND EARL

The revival of Black Lion is due to a new tie in with Counterpoint Distribution, who have come up with a new concept for marketing the label. The back catalogue, which includes some of those LPs mentioned above, is being repackaged as a mid-price American Jazz Classics series, after the fashion of the Prestige/Riverside OJC series, with the records issued in their original sleeves and a paper streamer giving an update of the music. Twenty-four issues are currently available. The Bud Powell trio session appears as *The Invisible Cage* (BLP30120) and that with Hawkins as *Hawk In Germany* (BLP30125). Some of the vintage material can be found on *Sunset All Stars* (BLP20112 and 30113) and *Art Tatum - The Genius* (BLP20124). One volume of the Monk sessions can be found as *Something in Blue* (BLP30119) and the first of the Dexter Gordon Monmarie sessions as BLP30102. There are some surprises, too, like the Illinois Jacquet session recorded at Ronnie Scott's (*The Genius At Work*) has not been widely available, but can now be found as BLP30118 and there's a welcome reminder of the Kenny Clarke/Francy Boland Band on *Doing Time* (BLP30109). But of all these, perhaps the most memorable is the Earl Hines set *Tea For*

Two (BLP30106), with some of the most intensive piano playing I have ever heard from Hines.

Also available again is the first volume of the Duke Ellington five-album series which first appeared as a mysterious box-set on the MF label in the States. It's joined by the companion four volumes, which have some intriguing, previously unheard Ellington, together with five albums by Louis Armstrong and five by Earl Hines.

As for the future, Alan Bates will be raiding the archives for unissued material, and setting up fresh sessions. Of course, much has changed since Black Lion made its first bow — the market has never been more saturated, and costs keep rising. This all means that the record buyer is more discriminating than ever, but the quality of much of the Black Lion catalogue and the efforts of Counterpoint will hopefully restore Black Lion to its deservedly prominent place. Who knows, we may even see the reinstatement of the Cecil Taylor and Archie Shepp sets, long absent, as well as so many others.

Greg Murphy

BLUE NOTES STILL SHARP

NOT CONTENT with the feast of

just four or five months ago, Pathe Marconi, in conjunction with the newly-revived US Blue Note, have flooded our ears with another treasure-trove of back catalogue classics. Now handled in this country by EMI, these titles, as were the last, are getting good promotion and distribution.

Some of this new wadge have previously been imported from France in a low-profile operation, so I'll not review them again, but merely list them and note their renewed presence in the stores:

- Miles Davis Volume 1 (BST 81501)
- Bud Powell Volume 1 (BST 81503)
- Thelonious Monk Volume 1 (BST 81510)
- Art Blakey One Night At Broadland Volume 1 (BST 81521)
- The Fabulous Fats Navarro Volume 1 (BST 81531)
- Sonny Rollins Volume 1 (BST 81542)
- John Coltrane Blue Train (BST 81577)
- Cannonball Adderley Somethin' Else (BST 81595)
- Dexter Gordon Go (BST 84112)
- Donald Byrd A New Perspective (BST 84124)
- Horace Silver Song For My Father (BST 84185)
- Herbie Hancock Maiden Voyage (BST 84195).

The only other comment to make on these titles is that, contrary to the otherwise

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THE HORACE SILVER QUINTET

SONG FOR MY FATHER BST 84185

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JOE HENDERSON

MODE FOR JOE BST 84227

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THELONIOUS MONK

GENIUS OF MODERN MUSIC,
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FAR AWAY LANDS BST 84425

DEXTER GORDON

GO BST 84112

THE FABULOUS FATS NAVARRO

VOLUME 1 BST B1531

LEE MORGAN

THE RAJAH BST 84425

McCoy Tyner

EXPANSIONS B BST 84338

JOHN COLTRANE

BLUE TRAIN BST B1577

JACKIE McLEAN

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ART BLAKEY

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exemplary reproduction standards of the original sleeves, the cover to Hancock's *Maiden Voyage* is not crisp, and the colours and wording are muddled. However, this is a minor detail: the pressings on all these titles are, to my ears at least, better than the previous Pathé Marconi re-releases, perhaps due to their adopting the DMM technique. Certainly, everything has been re-cut using this superior cutting method. I would venture to suggest that they're now as good as the original Blue Notes, which is no mean feat.

ALL-STAR SERMONISING

Now to the fresh titles: first up is *The Sermon* (BST 84011), one of Jimmy Smith's most famous dates for the label. It's got an all-star line up, and some of the luminaries include Lee Morgan, Lou Donaldson, George Coleman and Tina Brooks. Side One is all one track, and is an easy-going, medium-tempo piece where Morgan and Smith in particular excel. Side Two has two numbers, and on "Flamenco" Morgan gets the chance to play pretty. This record is one of the great ones.

Art Blakey's *The Big Beat* (BST 84029) features the Lee Morgan/Wayne Shorter edition of the Jazz Messengers, and dates from the beginning of the Sixties. While the release is certainly justified by the presence of Bobby Timmons' soulful "Dat Dere" (the follow up to "Dis Here"), the date as a whole is not one of Art's most inspired. Good playing from Shorter and Timmons throughout makes it pleasant listening, but Art, though obviously happy with the music being made, doesn't stretch it too far. A comfortable release.

Hub Cap (BST 84073), one of Freddie Hubbard's early sessions for Blue Note, however, is surprising in its energy and intensity. Doing a mixture of originals and jazz standards such as "Cry Me No", Hubbard is in blazing form, and communicates an energy and excitement rarely heard in his music these days. In this he is well matched by tenorist Jimmy Heath, who at this time was being headlined by Miles to replace the departing John Coltrane in his quintet. Heath here shows the reason for Miles' esteem.

Wayne Shorter's Blue Note output was largely neglected, or ignored, by critics when it first appeared; he seemed caught, up to the late Sixties, in the no-man's land between the jazz tradition of hard bop exemplified by his Jazz Messengers days and the freedom being displayed by the avant-garde. History has certainly altered that perspective, and the remarkable body of work Shorter recorded under his own name before joining Miles can now be more fully appreciated. *Juju* (BST 84182) was made in 1963 with John Coltrane's rhythm section, and is fascinating in its difference from the Coltrane dates of the same vintage. Shorter's approach is so much more oblique, his melodic line and tone more plastic and sinuous. He's chasing very different musical goals to Coltrane, where subtlety and sensitivity dominate raw power and passion. Elvin Jones, in particular, greatly impresses with his empathetic support work on drums. And the music is still exciting.

MUSIC FOR IRONING

Stanley Turrentine's *Joyride* (BST 84201) is also exciting, but for different reasons. For a start, Stan's tenor tone is huge and gregarious, his style one which is calculated to please the heart rather than the intellect. Here, Stan is helped by a small big band, and really rips the place up. This LP was a minor hit back in 1966/7, and the good humour and real spirit

in all the playing clearly shows why. This is a quality record and one to enjoy while you're doing the ironing, rather than examining your angst.

McCoy Tyner made an impressive series of records in the latter half of the Sixties with Blue Note. *Expansions* (BST 84338), at least to these ears, doesn't come up to the creative levels of previous re-releases such as *Tender Moments* and *The Real McCoy*. Perhaps the problem lies with the group, which to me doesn't seem wildly cohesive. While Shorter is master of the situation, Shaw and Bartz seem somewhat nervous and repetitive, and their music is often strained. The rhythm section, however, is absolutely top-notch, Tyner included.

Chick Corea, on *Song Of Singing* (BST 84353), certainly doesn't have any problems with the cohesiveness of his group. This trio date remains a high-point in Corea's recording career, and exhibits phenomenal interplay between Corea, Holland and Altschul. Their level of understanding is a joy to hear, and when Corea is this good on acoustic piano, then he's one of the greatest.

A tenor player who made a strong bid for the front rank during the Sixties with a string of fine records for Blue Note and then Mainstream is Joe Henderson. He's still with us, of course, and still playing well, but the record re-released here dates back to the mid-Sixties. *Mode For Joe* (BST 84227) was, at the time, Henderson's most ambitious date, featuring a four-piece front line plus rhythm section. I think it's fair to say that the front line isn't overworked as far as arrangement within songs or solos goes; it tends to be a sweetly written and well-executed head, then solos, then a repeat of the head at the end. However, the solo playing is of a pretty high standard, especially on "A Shade Of Jade" and "Caribbean Fire Dance", which also has an attractive rhythmic feel throughout. As ever, Joe Chambers, on drums, and Bobby Hutcherson, on vibes, play superbly. I can't ever remember hearing them play less than well. Cedar Walton, however, is a revelation: this date is certainly a high spot in his recorded career.

Lee Morgan, who acquires himself well on *Mode For Joe*, swaps leader/sideman roles with Henderson on his own *Delightfully* (BST 84243). This record, made around 1966, is a rather strange combination of a typical Blue Note small group date and a big-band-plus-trumpet ballad session. Four tracks have a quintet featuring Henderson and McCoy Tyner, while two, "Yesterday" and "Sunrise Sunset" feature Morgan in front of an Oliver Nelson-arranged band where Wayne Shorter shares solo spots with the trumpeter. Consequently, the LP does sound somewhat schizophrenic, especially as the order of the tracks puts the big band numbers last on Side One and first on Side Two, like an intermission, almost. The quintet sides are very fine, and the group sounds a very happy one, with "Ca-Lee-So" and "Nite File" shining in particular. "Yesterday", the first orchestral song, is certainly one of the worst versions I've ever heard of Paul McCartney's hit. "Sunrise Sunset" is a sight better, and Morgan sounds particularly comfortable on this piece. All in all, an odd record, but certainly of interest to Morgan fans.

HOOKED ON HORNS

Now we come to the special goodies, four previously unreleased sessions. Packaged in a sleeve style remarkably sympathetic to the old Reed Miles designs, all four live up to first expectations. The Clifford Brown Alternate

Takes (BST 84426) is pretty easy to recommend: most people will by now be familiar with the originals, and the alternate takes included here have been released before on the laudable Mosaic label. For those not able to dig that deeply into the bank balance, be assured that these takes, from Brownie's own sessions and from Lou Donaldson's, are by no means inferior to the originals. Anyone hooked on beautiful trumpet playing should certainly not hesitate to purchase a copy.

The same could easily be said about Lee Morgan's second title in this release, *The Raya* (BST 84426). This, to my ears, ranks with albums like *Candy*. *Search For The New Land* and *The Sidewinder* as one of Morgan's absolute best. "A Pilgrim's Funny Farm", by Cal Massey, contains a great arrangement and truly outstanding solos from Morgan and tenorist Hank Mobley. On this, as on the rest of the tracks, Billy Higgins excels with his dynamic but sympathetic drumming. Morgan here seems in such complete control of the music he's creating – there's no striving for effect, no empty technical displays. He's playing from well within himself, and projecting good feelings, constructing with care and always projecting that gorgeous, brassy, full tone of his. Buy it!

Hank Mobley has his own release in this series: *Far Away Lands* (BST 84425). On it he's supported by Don Byrd, Cedar Walton, Ron Carter and Billy Higgins. The rhythm section cooks all the way, and Walton's accompanying and thoughtful solos make him a special delight here. Byrd, to me, doesn't contribute as much as, say, Morgan or Dorham would have to the date, but what he plays is certainly good, and it fits in with the whole mood of the session. The date of the recording being 1967, many of the tunes are modal, or at least built around very open chords, so the influence of Coltrane in particular hangs over the harmonic sensibility of the album. Yet no one could ever mistake this record for one by a Coltrane imitator. This is Mobley all the way, and very good Mobley at that.

Tippin' The Scales (BST 84427) is Jackie McLean all the way. Recorded in 1962, this quartet session featuring Sonny Clark on piano falls between the two epoch-making albums, *Let Freedom Ring* and *One Step Beyond Curiosity*. It's decidedly post-bop in feel, reflecting perhaps a desire on McLean's part to keep his feet in both camps at that time. Stylistic oddities aside, there is no doubt at all that this is a very strong record, with McLean riveting throughout. His usual big, hard alto sound is well in evidence here, and he plays every note with total conviction. Sharp and accurate, his playing is full of invention and consistently rewarding to the listener. Sonny Clark, on one of his very last recording dates, plays with his usual intelligence and sensitivity, a fine pianist whether comping or soloing, his death was a great loss. Happily, McLean is still with us, and still playing well, over twenty years later.

So another batch of high-quality Blue Note records – and the deluge has only just begun. The label was such a high-quality organisation, thanks to Alfred Lion and Francis Wolff, that releases such as these could continue for years, and we'd still be welcoming first-class records. There's very few record companies in the jazz world one could say that about. E.M. Forster once raised two cheers for democracy. Martin Williams raised one cheer for rock & roll: I'd like to raise three cheers for Blue Note.

Keith Shadwick



at the
COTTON
club

COTTON CLUBBIN'

1. Tinseltown Swing

**Francis Ford
Coppola's film
about the Cotton
Club has rekindled
interest in the
New York jazz
scene of the
Twenties and
Thirties, the era
of hoods, Harlem
and hot, hot jazz.**

**In this special
Wire feature, we
report on the film
itself, meet two of
the people
involved, and also
take a look at the
Cotton Club's
relationship with
its two greatest
stars, DUKE
ELLINGTON and
CAB CALLOWAY.**

**Brian Priestley
appraises the film
all the fuss is about,
and finds
Hollywood has
treated Harlem with
surprising respect.**

FIVE YEARS ago, director Bob Fosse came out with the film *All That Jazz*, which of course contained virtually none of the commodity in question. But the reaction of independent film-maker Bruce Ricker (responsible for that marvellous documentary *The Last Of The Blue Devils*) was that Fosse had made a great step forward since, five years before that, "You couldn't possibly have done a movie in Hollywood with jazz in the title".

Now that the music is even more widely respected, we have a Hollywood film that has a lot to say about the surroundings in which early jazz was created, and quite a lot of footage devoted to people playing it. Being directed by Francis Coppola and co-written by Mario Puzo (*The Godfather*) and starring Richard Gere (American Gigolo etc etc), the production certainly set out to be what the money-men call "bankable", although it has yet to break even in the US. But, for a multi-million-dollar effort like this, what is surprising is how little compromise seems to be involved and how much conviction it carries.

The plot, naturally enough, hinges on gangsters and their connection with the entertainment business. Nowadays, we think of this principally in relation to the record industry, but back in the Twenties and early Thirties it was predominantly live stage shows which attracted their attention. The Cotton Club in Harlem was by far the most luxurious of the nightclubs that flourished during the Prohibition Era, catering (illegally, of course, as far as alcohol sales were concerned) to the spoilt rich who came to view black people through rose-coloured spectacles. And the spectacles which were put on for them most definitely pandered to their prejudices. The audiences saw and heard what they wanted to see and hear - primitives expending their exotic energies in "jungle" sounds and sexy gyrations. Little did they care that the talents of the musicians and dancers involved represented one of the peaks of black artistic activity so far, and that most of the pandering was firmly tongue-in-cheek on the part of the performers.

That conflict is the one element missing from what is otherwise quite a complex, multi-layered film. It might have been hard to get the white filmgoers to sit still long enough for the Cotton Club's all-black casts to debate the "concept" of their work. (And, of course, the ambiguity actually went one step further, since Duke Ellington created some of his most original early work for these shows -

despite the pandering and the tongue-in-cheek, or do I mean because of it?) Artistic ironies of that magnitude, though hinted at, are perhaps impossible to get across except when preaching to the converted, so the music in the film is reduced to mere re-creation. One-dimensional maybe (as all recreations tend to be) but excellently done, thanks to clarinetist-arranger Bob Wilber and "associate music supervisor, arranger and orchestrator" By Johnson, known to many for his work with Mingus. Remembering earlier Hollywood hashies, it is perhaps fortunate that there are no star guest appearances, unless you count the guy who impersonates Cab Calloway (Larry Marshall), but instead you get excerpts of Ellington either on-camera or, more often, used as source music during scenes taking place in the Club. The soundtrack album on Epic, by the way, consists almost entirely of this, with relatively little of the moody underscore by John Barry and none of the informal small-group music featuring hero Gere as white-boy-sitting-in-with-real-black-jazzmen. A pity, because his unghosted trumpet is at least as good as Woody Allen on clarinet...).

The role taken by Gere was described by Sy Johnson as being "based on Bix Beiderbecke and segueing into [dancer/actor] George Raft", while his girlfriend (played by Diane Lane) is clearly modelled on nightclub singer Helen Morgan. Both Raft and Morgan owed their advancement in showbiz to their association with the Mob, but one satisfying aspect of the film is that the black couple (Gregory Hines, Lonette McKee), not a million miles from the real-life "Boopables" Robinson and Lena Horne, get quite a bit of the action and the romantic interest. But even sex takes pretty much of a back seat to gangsternism and violence, which is doubtless how it must have seemed to those on the fringes of this milieu at the time. Hence the use of real names for Dutch Schultz (James Remar) and top bootlegger Owney Madden (a very convincing Americanised Bob Hoskins), who, for the purposes of the story, becomes the actual proprietor of the Cotton Club. This justifiable licence allows the white (ie Mob) takeover of black showbiz, which had enjoyed considerable independence earlier in the Twenties, to be counterpointed by Schultz's muscling in on the Harlem numbers racket.

As well as the violent end of Schultz intercut with Gregory Hines's tap-dancing, two other aspects of the closing sequence stay in the mind. One is the spotlighting of Chaplin and Fanny Brice to represent the celebrities who patronised the Cotton Club and therefore legitimised it in the eyes of the general public. And then there's Gere and girlfriend riding off into the West on a railroad train whose name is obviously meant to be symbolic: "The 20th Century Limited". Far from a fantasy-fulfilling happy-end, the message is that even the good and the beautiful will henceforth be hopelessly corrupted, not only in American society but wherever its influence extends. Just as jazz has been, you might say.

Brian Priestley

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EXERCISES

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QUARTET



LR 112

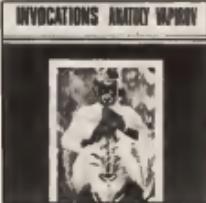
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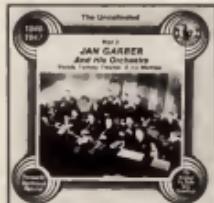


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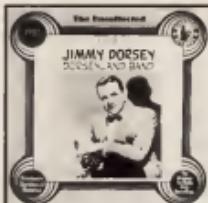
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COTTON CLUBBIN'

2. The First Dukedom Of Jazz

Earl Okin recounts the tale of DUKE ELLINGTON's involvement with the Cotton Club, and suggests that the relationship was mutually beneficial.

AS SOON as you begin to analyse the life of Duke Ellington, you are faced by the fact that, for once, the reality is even more impressive than the legend. The legend states, of course, that his career's meteoric rise began when he got the chance to open at the Cotton Club. Now, with Francis Ford Coppola's new film about it, the Cotton Club has become fairly legendary in its own right. But how does the famous Harlem night-spot measure up to its legend? What was it

**Adelaide Hall,
a Duke chanteuse**

like? Did the Cotton Club make Duke Ellington or did Duke Ellington make the Cotton Club?

The original Cotton Club (before it moved downtown) was situated towards the northern end of Manhattan. Its address was 642, Lenox Avenue on the corner of 142nd Street, and its evolution stemmed from the needs of what was then known as the "Negro Renaissance". As Southern agriculture was gradually mechanised, many black field-hands from all over the South had been thrown out of work. At the same time, the promise of employment and the general glamour of the Northern cities had drawn many of these workers in and newly-formed black ghettos appeared.

Thrown together in a strange urban environment, these people struggled to find a new identity to replace their old rural way of life. There were few places to turn to. There was the church of course, but it was chiefly to the world of night-life entertainment that the younger generation turned. The entertainment provided was not, at first, for the artistic elite, but was a big-city sophisticated version of rural folk-music. That is, it was music produced by a cultural-ethnic group to entertain themselves. Before long, outstanding artists appeared and black-owned clubs opened to display their talents.

This rather simplified account goes some way to explaining the appearance in the early Twenties of the De Luxe Club, owned by the black heavyweight boxing champion of the world, Jack Johnson. In his hands the club was not particularly successful, but, during this period of Prohibition, a group of gangsters had begun to notice that the white population of New York was showing an increased interest in this slightly taboo world of black night-life and they began to smell the irresistible scent of money to be made.

Jack Johnson was bought out, Lew Leslie was put in charge of production, and a resident band formed under the leadership of Andy Preer. The Cotton Club was born.

PSYCHOPATHS & HIT MEN

The big boss was one Arnold Rothstein, an operator who had made his "name" by managing to get the 1919 World Series fixed, thus making a killing out of the bets placed. There were other somewhat unpleasant characters about the place too, with colourful names like Big French or Dutch Schultz, and one never was completely sure that there might not be a psychopathic killer or at least a run-of-the-mill hit-man hanging around somewhere. (All in all, it was fortunate that Duke Ellington was found to have such a bad memory for names and faces when he was not infrequently interviewed by the police during the following few years.)

On the other hand, the well-heeled and almost exclusively white clientele (an occasional black celebrity such as Paul Robeson might be admitted) would not see much of this dubious side of operations. They came for the entertainment and the glamour: "like walking into the Arabian Nights" was how one witness put it. It wasn't just the size of the club (it held four to five hundred) or the details of the decor that really seemed to matter, but the general atmosphere and the glittering array of musicians, singers and dancers that offered such wonderful entertainment. And to many, before long, that excitement was

summed up in the personality, charisma and sound of Duke Ellington and his orchestra.

The Duke Ellington who opened at the Cotton Club on 4 December 1927 was not yet the glamorous celebrity whom we all knew from the mid-Thirties onwards. He was still an up-and-coming small-group leader from Washington who had been working at a downtown nightspot called the Kentucky Club. In 1927, Andy Preer had died. Legend has it that King Oliver was approached but the salary offered wasn't enough to tempt him into this still not particularly famous club. So, a band audition was arranged and, as so many times before and afterwards, Duke was at the right place at the right time. At the Kentucky Club he had been working with a sextet and had only used a larger group for the occasional recording date. By the time he had got together the extra five men required for the audition, it was mid-afternoon. As luck would have it, the man in charge, whom Duke named as Harry Block, didn't arrive until the afternoon either. Duke got the job. His was the only band Block heard.

Before long, Duke's special brand of big-band jazz was being heard over the airwaves in regular broadcasts from the Cotton Club. But the entertainment offered to patrons was not simply a couple of big-band jazz sets. The Cotton Club presented a properly organised night-club revue, and the audience was expected to be attentive, or else individuals would be asked to leave. Looking at a typical programme for a Cotton Club show, the band might only be allotted one or two features. For the most part it would be accompanying singers, dancers and specialty acts. Each season introduced a new dance craze, such as the Lindy Hop or the Skirtorch or whatever.

Duke had to adapt to every performer's personality. He had to play in all sorts of dance tempos. This developed his talents at a rate that perhaps no other training could have equalled. In return, the club received the services of the genius of the age – Duke really put it on the map.

GREAT LEAP FORWARD

Naturally, with hindsight, it would be easy to say that without Duke the Cotton Club might not have become so famous, and despite the undeniable talent of other bands who played there, that is unquestionably true; but let us not forget what the Cotton Club did for Duke. Apart from the chance to play for influential people and be heard regularly on the air, he got the opportunity – under financially secure conditions – to work with an eleven-piece band. Can one imagine how the Ellington sound might have developed, given the way that he loved to write for specific instrumentalists, if he had not been able to keep such definitive musicians as Harry Carney and Johnny Hodges in the band on a long-term basis? Then, if he wanted to get his own songs into the show, he had to compete with fine songwriters such as Jimmy McHugh and Harold Arlen. He also had to learn to arrange their material in such a way as to do them justice.

Listen to Duke's 1927 recordings. They are a great leap forward from his earliest attempts, where the band sounds little better than a King Oliver imitation. Surely it is no coincidence that it was during the period of his residency at the Cotton Club that he really established the sound which was to remain his trademark for the rest of his career.

With the help of his sidemen, he used those precious years at the Cotton Club to develop in several directions: as an arranger for others' material, as a personally bandleader, as a composer of imitable songs and



ADRIENNE HALL

strumentals, as a master of the jazz tonal-palette, even as an accompanying pianist. The luxury of having a residency at a venue that was musically challenging in just about as many ways as was possible in popular music at that time must have played at least a part in Ellington's growth. Nor were there travel schedules to meet; in his later life, what with the demands of the train and the aeroplane, he was rarely able to enjoy that sort of stability again.

The Cotton Club was, as I've said, paid nicely in return; but it also provided Duke with something that maybe he would have prided above everything I've mentioned so far. Among the ranks of the Cotton Club dancers he met first of all Mildred Dixon, and later Bea Ellis (as near a life-partner as he ever had). I have no doubt that Duke would have regarded his stay at the Cotton Club valuable for those meetings alone.

COTTON CLUBBIN'

3. Hi-De-Hi Times

Charles Fox
describes how a
decade at the
Cotton Club brought
CAB CALLOWAY
success — and a
very cheeky
stabbing by Dizzy
Gillespie.

THE COTTON Club was part of New York's night life for just under seventeen years — thirteen of them uptown, the final four downtown. During that period only two bands, those led by Duke Ellington and Cab Calloway, became closely identified with the club. Otherwise, Jimmie Lunceford's Orchestra had moved in for the 1934 and 1935 editions of "Cotton Club Parade", while Andy Kirk took over from Calloway for the summer show in 1939, to be followed by Louis Armstrong. And before Ellington originally took up residence in December, 1927, Andy Preer, a violinist, was leading a group variously known as The Missourians and The Cotton Club Syncopators.

Throughout the club's early years the policy of the owners, mobsters to a man, had been to send to Chicago for staff of every kind, including musicians. The Missourians, popular in the Midwest, originally hailed from St Louis. By the end of the Twenties one of their trumpeters was Lammar Wright, who had been in Bennie Moten's Kansas City Band. And links with Kansas City and Western jazz were reflected in the band's reliance upon blues and its fondness for riffs.

It was The Missourians, more or less intact, who provided Cab Calloway with his first regular band. Calloway — christened Cabell, incidentally — had been born in Rochester, New York on Christmas Day, 1907. The family moved to Baltimore, where he took singing lessons as well as playing drums with local jazz groups. Blanche, his elder sister, already in show business, was touring with "Plantation Days", one of the first major black revues, when Cab auditioned for the show, was accepted, and subsequently found himself living in Chicago. He became the house singer at the Sunset Club, where Manon Hardy's Alabamians came in for a season, only to have Calloway sing with the group, then take

over the leadership, and finally set out with them for New York City.

The Alabamians, competent but undistinguished, opened at the Savoy Ballroom in November, 1929, only to be given their notice on the first night. But Calloway was noticed. He had already begun developing a flamboyant style, leaping about the stage, an act as much as a singer. He remained in New York, working alongside Louis Armstrong in "Hot Chocolates" at Connie's Inn. But being asked to front The Missourians gave him a group against which he could flaunt his skills. It was that band with which he first recorded and that he took into the Cotton Club for the summer of 1930, while Duke Ellington was in Hollywood filming *Check And Double Check*.

HARLEM "JUNGLE"

The iniquitous aspects of the Cotton Club need not be dwelt upon here. It was run by a syndicate headed by Owney Madden, who had arrived in the United States from England at the age of eleven. He possessed, so it was said, the gentlest smile in New York's underworld, yet had no qualms about killing rivals or dissenters. The club was in Harlem but welcomed only white patrons. All the vital and best-paid jobs were — for quite a few years, anyway — in the hands of whites, including the songwriting, the producing of shows and the choreography. But all the performers were black. What the Cotton Club did provide, however, was a national radio hook-up. Bands playing there found themselves famous across America. Black music became familiar, even popular, with a broader white audience, even if the Cotton Club perpetuated old stereotypes — the benignancy of the South, the idyll of plantation life — and fostered some new ones, notably an image of Harlem as a kind of exotic jungle, only a handspring away from Africa.

Ellington and Calloway were both affected by these stereotypes. How Ellington's composing was influenced by the music he concocted for the "jungle" routines that were a regular part of the floor show is a fact of jazz history. Calloway, a less creative figure, nevertheless had to perform songs that gave a sunlit vision of the South (the place was not called The Cotton Club for nothing) and also a racy version of life in Harlem. Calloway's arrival at the club coincided with that of Harold

Arlen ("The blackest of the white songwriters," Ethel Waters always declared) and his lyric writer, Ted Koehler, both hired for \$50 a week each plus all the food they could devour. Their songs often gave a melodramatic account of happenings in the neighbourhood.

Some of us who bought Calloway's records in the Thirties were vaguely aware of what "Reetner Man" was supposed to be about. Few of us, however, realised that "Kicking The Gong Around" was a euphemism for smoking opium. Calloway's own song, "Minnie The Moocher", started off what amounted to a short saga of numbers about Smokey Joe ("She loved him though he was cokey") and other cheery characters. It also introduced the call-and-response exchanges between singer and band and became one of Calloway's trademarks. "Hi-de-hi" and "Ho-de-ho" were to reverberate in the most unlikely places for at least the next half century. Part of Calloway's success came from an element of outrageousness, the way he consistently went over the top, hair flopping across his face, wailing and scatting in a voice that actually had a considerable range. He was already superior to most black singers who have gone in for ballads and pop songs rather than blues, a fact which became more apparent as the years rolled past. He was also shrewd enough to pick the best musicians.

ON BROADWAY

In The Missourians Calloway had an ensemble that could attack in a fairly uncomplicated way. As was not uncommon at the start of the Thirties, the trumpeters (including at various times Lammar Wright, Reuben "Red" Reeves, Wendell Culey, Doc Cheatham and Ed Swayzee), trombonists (DePrest Wheeler and Harry White) and clariinetists (William Thornton Blue, Arville Harris and eventually Eddie Barefield) shone as soloists much more than the saxophone players, although Walter "Fooths" Thomas followed dutifully in the wake of Coleman Hawkins and also contributed some useful arrangements.

Calloway had brought Benny Payne in as his pianist, yet for quite a while the rhythm section stayed a trifle rigid. That changed with the arrival in 1932 of Al Morgan, a brother of the New Orleans bandleader Sam Morgan and one of the outstanding bass players of his



Duke's horns

generation. From the moment that Morgan is first heard slapping his bass on the records the band takes on a new lissomness and vitality. When Morgan decided to move to California in 1936 his place was taken by Milt Hinton, nicknamed "Fungi" and decidedly diminutive ("When I joined the band," Hinton has recalled, "I had to wear Al Morgan's jacket and he was about a foot and a half taller. You couldn't even see my hands"). The establishment of Calloway's rhythm section as one of the finest in jazz was clinched in 1938 when Cozy Cole took over the drums from Leroy Maxey, who had been with The Missourians since 1923 and only left Calloway because of illness. But the event consolidated Calloway's band as much more than a backing group for its exuberant leader.

Halfway through 1936 the Cotton Club moved from Harlem to a place where Broadway meets Seventh Avenue. The Ellington and Calloway bands continued – most of the time, anyway – to alternate at providing music for the club's revue, now



Gregory Hines and Lotette McKee

styled "The Cotton Club Express". Unlike his situation in the early Thirties, when his band became the first established black orchestra from New York to tour the South (with the consequent racial humiliations recounted in Calloway's autobiography, *Of Mice And Men*), Cab Calloway was now as established as any black artist could be, hiring special trains or buses when the band needed to travel, paying more money than any other black bandleader. His policy was not to go looking for unknown musicians but to hire the finest around. In 1938, for example, he enticed Chu Berry away from Fletcher Henderson's band. Although Berry's most famous recording with Calloway was of a ballad, "Ghost Of A Chance", his finest playing is probably to be found on the large quantity of medium-paced numbers which suit his bustling, zealous manner.

Berry was to die in a road accident in October, 1941 while on his way to a Calloway one-nighter. Although never an innovator, like Hawkins or Lester Young, he was a tenor saxophonist of great character and mobility, the first major jazz soloist to work in Calloway's band.

MYSTERY SPITBALL

One of the odder Calloway recordings, "A Bee-

Gedzint", made in November 1939, has a succession of voices popping up. "I'm Chu the Foo," says the first, "I'm Stop the Hop," says another (it turns out to be Lammar Wright). Suddenly there is a familiar murmur: "I'm Diz the Wiz". Dizzy Gillespie, the next major soloist to work in Calloway's orchestra, joined it immediately after returning from Europe with Teddy Hill's band. By then Calloway had a trombone section of Tyree Glenn, Quentin Jackson and Keg Johnson; Jerry Blake was the clarinetist, Hilton Jefferson led the saxophones, while Andy Gibson and Buster Harding were two of the regular arrangers. On his very first recording session with Calloway, in "Plunkin' The Bass", featuring Milt Hinton, Gillespie showed that he was no longer merely a copier of Roy Eldridge. Bebop still lay in the future but he was already moving in that direction. Further evidence was provided by the occasional score he wrote. The Latin feel in "Picken' The Cabbage" is especially pleasant, partly influenced by the fact that Gillespie's room-mate in the band was the Cuban trumpeter Mano Bauza, and that he frequently heard the Cuban flautist, Alberto Socarras, playing at the Cotton Club. Gillespie's career with Calloway ended when a spitball was thrown on-stage. Calloway believed Dizzy to be responsible, upbraided him for it afterwards, and was promptly knifed in the buttock.

The man who really threw the spitball, according to Calloway's autobiography, was Milt Hinton. According to Gillespie it was Jonah Jones, a trumpeter who may not have had all the genius that Hugues Panassié glimpsed in him yet was a lively, aggressive soloist, melodic as well as exciting. But that brawling took place in 1941. Calloway was to go on leading bands for six years or so, before taking on the role of Spokin' Lee in *Porgy And Bess*, an action that alerted many people to the calibre of his voice. But the Cotton Club had finally closed its doors in the summer of 1940. Performers who worked there for any length of time look back on the experience rather as conscripts recall their military past, with a mixture of bitterness and affection. Quite a few facts of life encourage that kind of ambiguity.

overtures the next day to see Mr Hines personally and ended up in the early afternoon at a regional press reception in Soho Square where I was able to fire a few questions at both Gregory Hines and the film's musical director, band leader/composer/arranger/clarinettist Bob Wilber.

Bob explained first that after the initial looting and razing that saw Jerry Wexler head the request to exit, he "was brought back from a European tour on Concorde one weekend and was persuaded by Francis Coppola that I was the man for the job. After that, I commuted back and forth until the film was completed."

Wilber, a performer dedicated to upholding the virtues of jazz's vintage years, had found a perfect soul-mate in the eccentric director, Francis Coppola.

"Francis was totally committed to creating a completely accurate and authentic atmosphere for the movie, even to the extent of having facsimile ash trays made from an original film of the club he had seen, and he was particularly concerned about the music."

"The musicians were drawn from a pool of players in New York who are known to be particularly au fait with the sound of that era and they were each brought in to play the part of an actual Cotton Club musician as well as record the music."

Wilber himself overdubbed all of the soprano, alto and clarinet solos and informed us that "Richard Gere played all of his own cornet and piano. He is actually a fine musician who once played jazz for a living."

Gregory Hines, a personal hero since his vocal performance on the last Jimmy Cobb album, was very friendly and open, explaining how his family had "always lived with jazz. My brother Maurice and I were very influenced by our father who was a big band fan. He'd come home and take off my Chuck Berry and put on some Stan Kenton."

Originally, it seems, producer Robert Evans wanted Hines, a much-renowned Broadway performer for a few years now, for the Cab Calloway part but when Richard Pryor was unable to play the part of Sandman, Hines "pestered Evans' office. Even when he told the receptionist not to put me through, I told

COTTON CLUBBIN'

4. Hey, Mr Sandman

Mark Webster trips the light fantastic with Cotton Club star GREGORY HINES and the film's musical director BOB WILBER.

SOME MAY consider it a piece of ill fortune, but I got home early the other night and caught the end of the *Wogan show*. However, in this instance, fortune favoured the brave as our genial Irish chat-show host was attempting to trip some form of light fantastic with Gregory Hines, our very own hot-stepping Sandman from the *Cotton Club* film.

Assessing immediately there was a fair chance he was in the country, I made

her that I hoped she realised she was snubbing the future star of the picture. And that I'd remember that!

He told too high, between shooting, "all the old guys sat round and played poker all day. Those guys were really, really, turned on by it all. Hell, at one point one of them had a harsh word at another one about something that had happened in 1928 and they were up out of their chairs and squaring up. We had to hold them back gently because they were real old guys."

It seems also that, due to the heavy-handedness of the editor, the best music scene of the movie, "Tall, Tanned And Terrific", featuring Hines and Lotette McKee, has ended up on the cutting room floor; a point both Wilber and Hines related with a quirky resignation that, apparently, is an important facility to have when working with Francis Coppola.

It was good to see that both men came through unscathed and still smiling.

ERIC DOLPHY

THE ESSENTIAL ALBUMS

1. Charles Mingus Presents Charles Mingus

Candid CJM 8005

Quintessential small-group collective improvisation, with Mingus and Dolphy achieving incredible levels of intensity. It's worth noting in passing, however, that *Mingus At Antibes* (Atlantic) is even wilder.

2. Magic Carrere 68 419

This double contains the classic *Far Cry* date (recorded, incidentally, on the same day as Ornette's *Free Jazz*), which was the best of the Prestige studio sessions. Dolphy, Booker Little and Jaki Byard are all at an early peak.

3. The Great Concert

Prestige 34 002

Originally released on three separate LPs, this Five Spot date with Booker Little, Mal Waldron, Richard Davis and Ed Blackwell is early Sixties small-group jazz at its best.

4. Copenhagen Concerts

Prestige HB6118

A distillation of over three records' worth of material, Dolphy here displays mesmeric brilliance on alto in particular, and totally dominates his European rhythm section.

5. Coltrane & Dolphy At Birdland Affinity AF 79

Since their deaths, a great deal of material featuring these two giants together has been released, and this 1962 airtape certainly is some of the best of it. Dolphy here is decidedly more abstract than on previous sessions.

6. Music Matador Affinity AF 47

Originally released as *Conversations* on the poorly distributed FM label, this has appeared under many titles since 1963. It is one of Dolphy's masterpieces, and every track in an enormously diversified programme is a gem.

7. Mingus At Town Hall OJC 042

This is the sextet which completed the 1964 European tour, and it includes some utterly beautiful duets between Dolphy and Mingus on "Meditations". But the whole date is superb.

8. Point Of Departure

Blue Note BST 84167

This Andrew Hill record features all Hill compositions, and is a masterpiece. Dolphy's participation is at all times stunningly imaginative and sympathetic. This is a real group effort.

9. Out To Lunch Blue Note

BST 84163

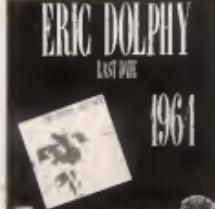
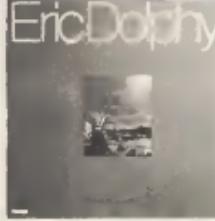
Dolphy's most sophisticated record, and a real landmark in the evolution of jazz, both for the music in it, and for its wide-reaching influence. All compositions are by Dolphy.

10. Last Date Luminight-Deleted

Recorded in Europe after Dolphy left the '64 Mingus tour, this has a good European rhythm team which helps Dolphy to shine on every track. "Epistrophy" has wry bass clamer, while "You Don't Know What Love Is" shows that Dolphy surely did know.

N.B. A record, *Iron Man* on Douglas International, is missing from this list. It contains more material from the 1963 *Conversations* date. It's missing because it's now extremely rare.

Keith Shadwick



SOMETIMES THE unlikeliest source will provide the unlooked-for connection. At the Academy cinema, weathering a short film on the Spanish Riding School in Vienna, I was suddenly pierced with an epiphany. These ramrod backs, the sombre inward Velasquez profiles of the riders, the utterly subtle pressures from rein-to-mouth, from heel-to-flank, the precise placement of hooves, side front shuffles stop speed, all of it, the whole equestrian aesthetic, was Max Roach behind the trap set. It was an image that stayed with me.

For a couple of decades, it scared me off from going backstage to say hello. I was afraid, perhaps, that he might let himself down. One can roll up a jazz hero in a minute like that, because one made them up. Also, there was Dexter Gordon's rather off-pulling remark that "Max is kind of Mephistophelean . . . he's got a very sharp mind, very apt, but personality-wise, he's not a real warm-type cat". Far outweighing either factor, however, was the fact that his body of work has been distinguished by such clarity and precision of concept and execution that questions seemed superfluous. Max making wax said it all.

Watching him watch himself on screen at a press preview of *Sil Down And Listen*, his section of the excellent Channel 4 "Repercussions" series, Max was as contained as one could wish. Sometimes he nodded a little; that was it. He had loved the show, though, led the applause for director Geoffrey Haydon, and later enthused. "It was unbelievable. Strong, powerful, and if said a lot about what is going on in the States now, I hope American television will be receptive to it."

His main previous experience of being on film had been Carmen Jones, a brief appearance for the "Beat Out That Rhythm On A Drum" number. He had not been attracted to Hollywood, but he had written a lot of music for the theatre. Currently, he is involved in three Sam Shepard plays off-Broadway.

"I love his work. *Sucide In B-Flat* is about a jazz musician, and Shepard is really into the jazz. I think he used to be into those East Village poetry sessions with Mingus and Amiri Baraka. There's one character in the play who's constantly playing the saxophone but you never hear any sound. When he's asked why, he says, 'Well – it's a high frequency, so high that dogs won't even hear it. That's why it's hard to sell.' Musicians are going to identify with that – you know, so far out it's hard to sell. It's amazing how close Shepard got to it."

With the exception of Sven Klang's Combo, most feature films about jazz sell the music short. Cotton Club sounds like another missed opportunity. I told Max that director Robert Altman had finally given up on the Cotton Club project with the words, "Why fuck up the jazz?"

"Yeah, Stanley Crouch did a scathing critique of it called 'The Rotten Club' for the

Village Voice, criticizing the racism. It has nothing to do with Duke Ellington. They had all these fine black musicians to play his music – and then they got a studio orchestra to overdub the sound. Stanley tore into that! He got a lot of letters to the paper calling him a racist. He said, 'Why not?' When they did *Lady Sings The Blues*, they were assuming that the public was not gonna deal with what jazz really is. They made *Lady Day* appear as if people took advantage of her, but it was the other way round. She was a tyrant, you know, a very strong person. The only way a woman could survive in the jazz world which is predominantly male and predominantly instrumental was by being strong. Dinah Washington was her own boss too. They had to be."

So far, no one has approached him as a consultant for the elusive Richard Pryor biopic on Charlie Parker, though the Alvin Ailey Dance Company did for a forty-minute ballet on Bird, and cast a dancer as Max Roach.

At sixty, the great drummer did not seem so forthcoming about the injustices and intolerances of the recording business as he had during the turbulent Sixties. It's a long time since the tacit recording ban on his work after *We Insist: Freedom Now Suite* and *Percussion Battle* Sweet, and a long time since the Newport Rebels organized their Alternative Festival. The Debut label, owned by Roach and Mingus, has long since been sold to Fantasy, there just wasn't time to play music and deal with distribution.

Relaxed in his hotel lounge, Max seemed more mellow than he had been, but then, the integrationist movement in the States has altered too. None of the young black actors interviewed in a recent Sight & Sound feature on the film, *A Soldier's Story*, which deals fearlessly with racism in the US Army, wanted to be recruited for The Cause. None gave the impression that they had even heard of Garvey, Cleaver, Medger Evers or even Robeson: they were all glad to be employed. Max did not speak of classical music as "imperialistic", controlled solely by the composer and conductor, with the musicians "no more, no less than peons or serfs", nor did he repeat his opinion that "disco and all that is conspiratorial . . . I think it's to the benefit of the Government to keep everyone dancing and partying so that they don't think about the issues that affect your daily life . . . it's used to choreograph our every action, everything, film, music, all of it."

Not even the shameful treatment of his album, *Chattahoochee Red*, named for the Atlanta river running with the blood of murdered blacks, and featuring a superb duet between the leader's drums and the recorded voice of Martin Luther King, stirred him to public wrath on this mild afternoon. The album got no distribution here at all.

"Well, the recording arm of the CBS conglomerate is a very small portion of it. They're into so many things – the New York Yankees, for one example. A company as big as that, there's no one person big enough to

wield the power to say, this can happen, this can't happen. The recording side is run by computers. After five years if you're in the red, they fire you. They computerized Dexter. Two or three hundred thousand albums, I think that's CBS's bottom line. I don't get pressure from companies like that to make commercial records. Usually the deals I make are like *Chattahoochee Red*. If CBS is interested, they'll say you do what you want to do, this is your project. But if it doesn't fit into the marketing scheme, they do what they did with *Chattahoochee Red*. Just say, OK – we've done something with Max, that's it."

These days, he prefers dealing with a small, dedicated label like Giovanni Bonandrini's Soul Note. "Mr. Bonandrini just loves the music. He gave us the fairest deal for the tapes of the duet I did with Cecil Taylor. To him, that was adventurous. It certainly wasn't the kind of album we expected to be commercial, but we thought it was historical and it could never happen again. We placed a value on it that we didn't consider extreme, but the big companies we approached I guess could not fit it into a marketing pocket. You see, most record companies believe the public dictates the taste, and one of the few jazz artists who has been successful in dictating how he deals with that market is Miles Davis. He is about surviving. I love Miles."

Drummers are usually supportive of each other. A nice example of that occurred a few years ago on a drum package featuring Max Roach, Art Blakey, Elvin Jones and Sunny Murray which hit Hammersmith. It attracted one of those terror-of-the-terraces-type audiences which roars at the established names and boos everyone else. Sunny Murray's ride cymbal waves fell foul of the fancy, and it was only the intervention of Max, who stood conspicuously listening in the wings, that gained him a fair hearing.

"I really love what Sunny does because he's an individual. A lot of people question how he does it or whatever, but the fact is he dares to be himself, and he deserves some kinda support. Sunny Murray, Andrew Cyrille, Milford Graves – I'm interested in all of them because they're working at making the drums an instrument that can stand on its own, and that's unexplored territory. In the public's mind, well, maybe they still back off from it."

He modestly avoided mentioning his own work in that area, the unaccompanied tracks like "The Drum Also Waltzes" and "For Big Sid", the solo albums like the Japanese Columbia and Soul Note's *Survivors*, the front-line contributions to Bird, Rollins. His career has exacted a full retaliation against the studio engineers who threw a rug over his bass drum back in 1944. They would have their work cut out muttering *M Boom*.

"I enjoy myself. I have the opportunity to do what I want to do and realize some of the projects that I have at the back of my mind. I like to diversify. I recently did an experimental project with the DJs and rappers and break

- raconteur of rhythm from bebop to break

Case meets the "Mephistophelean" MAX ROACH,

dancers. It was a real theatre piece. One of the young breakers who was about sixteen, he came backstage after the first night at the Kitchen in the SoHo area. He looked at me. "What did you say your name was?" I said, Max Roach. He said, "You know, you really play those drums. You're all right, man."

Max chuckled. "That was the height of compliments, coming from his generation."

FOOTNOTE: On the vexed question of whether Max Roach is equestrian rather than Mephistophelean, the last word should go to Walter Bishop. "Well," said Bishop, one night at Ronnie Scott's, "you have to realize first of all that Max is a roach. The roach is a survivor older than man. Can't get rid of roaches, spray them here, they just move next door. Did you know roaches even survived the nuclear holocaust? Listen — I've written a poem on the subject. Pardon the rhymes, my man.

"*Max The Invincible Roach*." Bishop announced, and cleared his throat.

"There was a roach named Maxwell D. Roach. A most unusual roach in that he could fly, having wings, and he played the drums of all things. After a time he met up with some other playing insects. Lemme see — there was the Yard Bug, up from Kansas City. He played blues on alto like you never heard! There was a Bad Bug named Birks, came from South Carolina. He played notes on the trumpet that could make you dizzy! And then there was the Loneliest Bug, played piano, to my mind, the strangest bug of all. They say he was born round midnight.

"The bugs got together and they created some of the damndest sounds you ever heard! Soon the other insects spread the word. They proclaimed a new music is born. Bee-bop, it was called. Man, insects came running, crawling, flying from all over because they wanted to learn it, but it wasn't easy because you had to earn it.

"Usa congregates in a place called the Uptown Bughouse in Harlem, and soon the craze began to spread to the Jitterbugs. They waltzed to it. Grasshoppers did the Lindy Hop to it. The movement earned the usual complement of parasites and leeches.

"Then society got the word, decided that roaches and bugs were overrunning Harlem, decided these insects had to be destroyed. They sent the exterminators uptown with insecticides, pesticides, Black Flagg, Roach Motel. Man — they sprayed and sprayed and kept on spraying, but those bugs, man, they played and played and kept on playing. Bee-bop! Bee-bop! You dig what I'm sayin'? Instead of dyin', they kept on multiplying.

"Society brought in the big rock to crush 'em. Lemme tell ya, that did slow them down some, and they didn't all survive. It took a heavy toll. The Yard Bug flew to the higher ground, but what he left will always be around. They couldn't kill Birks, they just made him stronger. The Loneliest Bug hid away to last a bit longer. And our hero, Max, I'm happy to say, is alive and well, playing the song they could not quell. Freedom Now!"



NECK WHITE

hi · hat and tales

A NEW WOMAN FOR AFRICA

In her native Nigeria ONYEKA is a controversial singing star, journalist and film-maker. She tells Charles de Ledesma how a woman who wants to control her own music has to fight against both multi-national power and male prejudice.

INCE ONYEKA returned to her native Nigeria in 1981 after a ten-year stay in the USA she's achieved a phenomenal amount of success. Not only has she made three LPs – her second *For The Love Of You* has sold 150,000 copies and her third and latest, *In The Morning Light*, was top of the Nigerian LP charts in February and March – but she's a fashion designer, journalist and film-maker as well.

"Though I've been singing for as far back as I can remember it took me a long time to enter professional singing. I studied and trained in television and journalism before going into music professionally. It's a good thing that I've got these skills as I've never made enough out of music to support myself. Though I considered professional singing when I was living in New York I was put off by there being so much competition and it was only upon returning to Lagos in '81 that I met up with Sonny Okusun [Nigeria's leading highlife fusionist] and recorded my first LP with him."

Onyeka was soon in conflict with the mega-corporations which run the Nigerian music business.

"My first two LPs were on EMI Nigeria and, though we knew how many copies had been pressed, EMI's estimate of the numbers sold fell far short of our figures. The plant pressed 150,000 copies, EMI said they'd sold 40,000! We confronted them with these figures but we have never received any answers. As a result I helped set up PAN (Performing Arts of Nigeria) as a lever to secure one's basic artistic rights, set up my own label Mother Africa, and arranged a legally watertight deal with Polygram wherein I own the mastertape – not them!"

Onyeka is following in the footsteps of other top Nigerian musicians like Ebenezer Obey and Sunny Ade in forming her own company. Others don't do it either because they are up to their necks in debt – like Sonny Okusun – or just too poor to find the initial capital.

"I'm involved in a legal case with EMI but most musicians haven't got the money to take them on – Ade went through the courts and eventually won. Not one single artist has stayed with EMI Nigeria – they've all left."

'Nigera's new military government's War Against Corruption could, in theory, help musicians.

Onyeka: "Bootleggers are guilty of creaming off a vast amount of our music's proceeds. I understand that three weeks ago a ship was impounded with thousands of tapes of Nigerian artists' music. These tapes are made outside Nigeria where raw materials are cheaper – often in the Ivory Coast – then smuggled in."

One artist who certainly hasn't benefited from the military take over is Fela Kuti, jailed for five years on a trumped-up currency charge. Why hasn't there been a vociferous musician-based movement to pressurise the government to free him? I ask.

"Unfortunately at the moment in Nigeria there aren't too many people with guts who are willing to speak out and, I'm afraid to say, the musicians are scared. PAN has just registered as a union but it has to keep quiet to look on the right side of the law."

Stereo Records, London's African music specialists, have recently released a double-A-sided single of Onyeka's, "Trina Four" is a reggaefied rhythmic gem, produced and mixed here in London by retired Nigerian Kenny St George, while "Ekwe" is a reworking of an Ebo folk song.

"My fans in Nigeria couldn't get round 'Trina Four' – the bobbies were, for a start, too weird for them," says Onyeka, "but they love 'Ekwe' (a fast joyous African pop classic). My band are mostly Cameroonian musicians which is both a bad thing – in my experience most Nigerian session musicians are lazy and lacking in professionalism – and a good thing as it reflects the pan-African influences infecting Nigerian music."

The intelligent welding of a number of influences, from soul, funk and reggae to makossa and soukous, is largely, if not exclusively, coming about by the efforts of women.

"Women singers like Dora Fundi and Martha Olatu have their own labels and are excellent talents. Martha used to be an opera singer. Also young singers like Stella Monye are the voices of tomorrow. It isn't easy for women to survive in music. If they aren't

strong they give up; you are dealing with a male-dominated industry. Nigerian men have a way of looking at 'their' women: they should sit in the background. Many of us are multi-talented and educated and we know what we want, we go out and get it and make no apologies. You have to get used to being called too aggressive, a slut and a bitch."

Onyeka's career in film began in Washington, where she worked for a TV company, and came to its zenith when her documentary *Nigeria: A Squanderer Of Riches* was shown last year on Channel Four and, a while later, in abbreviated form, on Nigerian television.

"Though the film was made before the coup and I predicted in it what was, in effect, about to happen the censor had objections and large chunks of it were edited out. I had produced evidence to back up the case that financiers in the north of Nigeria had spent the oil revenue irresponsibly: I was accused of 'irresponsible journalism'!"

Onyeka knows she won't get another contract from Nigerian television and she's concerned that her writing is now getting overlooked.

"I accepted the offer of writing a weekly column for a paper *The Vanguard*. I wrote them this very objective article on Fela but it looks like they're chickening out as it hasn't yet appeared. Through there is censorship of the press, some magazines like *Newswatch* are willing to speak the truth – they expect trouble but they know that their first priority is to say what is going on, regardless of the consequences."

The title track of Onyeka's latest LP *In The Morning Light* finishes with the beautiful lines "In the morning light I see you as you are, shades of wasted night coming back to you".

She is referring to Lagos. "When you come into Lagos at night it is dazzling. In the morning light you see it as it is – beggars, dirt everywhere, people starving, no amenities, no medicine. But in the midst of all the sadness and shame there are people who have so much money they don't know what to do with it. That has not changed. Nigeria is a hard country but Nigerians are a strong people."

"It isn't easy for women to survive in music . . . you are dealing with a male-dominated industry . . . you have to get used to being called too aggressive, a slut and a bitch."



S I N G I N



nce a Pere Ubu
front - man, now a
vocal Pedestrian,
DAVID THOMAS
has pursued his
search for intimate
music from New
Wave rock to the
farther shores of
free improvisation.

Kenneth Ansell
finds a square peg
between two round
holes.

G ON HIS FEET

● David Thomas & The Art of Communication

SINCE THE group Pere Ubu ceased to function in 1981, David Thomas has pursued a singularly individual path. At first entirely solo, later enrolling Lindsay Cooper (reeds) and Chris Cutler (percussion), he has linked narrative, songs and – latterly – musical interludes in a series of articulate and provocative concert performances. At their best these have involved audiences in a way that is all too rare, particularly in the rock sphere where "spectacle" is all too often substituted for "content".

These performances – and their vinyl counterparts, the live *Winter Comes Home* and the recent *More Places Forever* – find Thomas on the cusp of rock music and improvisation; moreover, as a writer and performer, they demonstrate his commitment to the song form. These are the elements on which he draws and through which he works to achieve his goals.

"When Ubu ended," Thomas recalls, "the thing which I felt was lacking in my work – and which I felt I wanted to achieve – was a real communication with the audience. I wanted to create, for instance, the sort of intimacy which a husband and wife have when they're alone, or which friends have when they spend a pleasant evening together. I wanted to achieve that in my performances, and that's the way we judge our performances now."

A long way, it might seem, from the rock'n'roll of the "New Wave". As vocalist and lyricist with Pere Ubu, Thomas had been an important figure in shaping the "New Wave" of rock music which followed in the wake of punk during the late Seventies. The urgency of Ubu's sound, particularly on their first singles and the *Modern Dance* album, bore some superficial resemblance to the vocabulary of the genre, although direct comparisons ignored the warmth and subtle humour at the heart of much of their music.

With subsequent albums Ubu moved progressively further and further from the sound of the *Modern Dance*. They expanded the instrumental textures, creating more space within the arrangements, and with each album they shifted the instrumental focus as they found solutions to the new problems they set themselves. In doing so, Ubu became increasingly divorced from the mainstream of the "New Wave" until Thomas' lyrics for "Home Are A Dilemma" (on the *Song Of A Bailing Man* album) could equally have applied to the group themselves: "Square pegs for round holes/Rounds pins for triangles". Viewed in this light it is not such a big step from Ubu to The Pedestrians, the name under which his current group works. And, as if to emphasise this continuity, the material they have performed has been drawn largely from two Ubu albums, *The Art Of Walking* and *The Song Of The Bailing Man*. In the interim, though, Thomas had undertaken a series of solo concerts in which the process of reworking this material began.

"I decided I had to strip everything away and see what I'm made of, to see what I had to

say. I felt a need to see if I really should be a performer, or whether I should, perhaps, do something else."

Thomas was also interested in reducing the manipulative elements of performance while, at the same time, retaining the capacity to communicate with prestructured material – songs – whose integrity was capable of withstanding the pressures of repetition night after night in the context of a protracted tour.

"A song, in the end, will become just something you'll do. Even a song of intense pain, which is very real to you at one point . . . after a while you don't feel it any more, you're just doing it and it's just like a parody. You don't always feel the same way, you see the story in different ways depending on what sort of day you've had."

"But I wanted to try and sustain an idea which we had with Ubu: that was doing our best to ensure that the music would continue to be honest in circumstances which do everything to prevent it, where you're on the road performing night after night after night. In order to do that you need to set yourself different problems, to shift the emphasis of the songs and to change what you're doing according to the audience each night."

In establishing this three-way symbiotic relationship in which performer, material and audience feed off and interact with each other, Thomas questioned the fundamental principles of each. It was through the use of improvisation – in its broadest sense – that Thomas found he was able to achieve this level of interaction. He was not interested, however, in an outright rejection of the song format (it remains the foundation on which he builds his art), nor of the rock form as a vehicle for expression ("I've still got this albatross around my neck of enjoying 'getting down and rocking' and doing songs with verses and choruses").

It was inevitable, given these concerns, that Thomas would also turn his attention to examining the relationship between voice and instruments.

"At that time I was very much concerned with the relationship between the vocals and the instruments. I reached the conclusion that basically vocal music and instrumental music are incompatible. The voice will want to change from night to night, even from moment to moment, but to do that with structured instrumental music is very hard and is perhaps impossible. In the end I worked with just two lead instruments (my voice and a horn), to try and find the possibilities of vocal music and improvisation with just one other instrument. It seemed that with just two people you could get a lot more intimate than you could with a band."

"When it became comfortable with the two of us I thought, 'Well, let's add a drummer', so Chris Cutler came in and that worked out fine, now we've added Tony Maimone (an old associate from Pere Ubu) on bass."

"So the solution to the problem I set myself now seems obvious: you have a group of people with whom you have worked enough to

begin to understand them and their art. That's the ideal situation. You can communicate very quickly and can improvise together and things – people who know when to 'rock' and know when to 'art'! So that, if I have an idea one night to take and expand the theme of some words then I'll have people working with me who can do that."

In Lindsay Cooper and Chris Cutler, Thomas found two accomplished and like-minded musicians. They share a partnership which spans Henry Cow, The Orkestra, News From Babel and the Gold Diggers band. They switch adeptly from improvisation to structure, with detail and melody playing important roles in their music-making. Both have demonstrated parallel interests in rock music and improvisation, combining them in vigorous and subtle ways. Although, at the time of writing, Tony Maimone has yet to appear with The Pedestrians in Britain, his work on the *More Places Forever* album suggests that he will quickly become an integral part of the group.

The Pedestrians work with Thomas to create music that shows a human aspect. They are interested, too, in attempting to stretch themselves with each performance.

"We wanted to set ourselves obstacles and challenges to overcome. Sometimes we might set ourselves such challenges that despite our best efforts we perhaps start to mess things up. But that's OK, because we're only human up on that stage, attempting to communicate with the humans who make up the audience."

"I don't mind if something goes wrong, that possibility makes it more exciting. And perfection isn't really very interesting. All you need to perform perfect music is money. The technology can be bought so that every harmony you attempt to sing can be made to sound perfect, you can use drum machines to produce perfect rhythms and pre-recorded tapes so that everything is perfect all the time. But that's not very interesting, and it's not really very human. All the audience is getting is . . . cheated! Cheated out of the gambles and risks which are taken and overcome. Everyone knows instinctively when a band has tried something and succeeded."

It is doubtless this sense of challenge and adventure, coupled with the musical authority of The Pedestrians and the perception of Thomas' lyrics, which can make their concerts so satisfying and stimulating. To date The Pedestrians have been creating space for themselves within existing song structures. With *More Places Forever* they have helped to create those structures – especially Lindsay Cooper, whom Thomas credits with much of the compositional organisation of the music on the album. When such skills are combined with Thomas' ability as a raconteur to involve his listeners in a very personal manner, their work can be exceptional.

"When you go out there and perform you want to create intimacy. That's the rarest sort of feeling there is these days. That, to me, has always been something worth striving for, something to achieve."

ETER KING must surely wince sometimes at being called, yet again, a World-Class Jazz Player.

Nothing remotely wrong with such an appellation, mind you, for in his case it's so richly deserved. Never more so than in the present. Certainly, too, it's better than a metaphorical kick up the ass – the kind of reward which all too often has been the fate of British jazzmen of King's generation (and the one before that, come to think of it), almost obligatorily administered by a rigidly unpatriotic section of local followers, all too anxious to raise the Stars & Stripes in salutation to any number of the latest performers to appear on the Stateside scene.

There is absolutely no doubt that Peter King can stand up and wall – and more than hold his own – in even the most exalted company. Anytime, anywhere. Indeed, without being uncharitable enough to mention names, one can remember those occasions when several notable US jazz soloists with whom he has shared the same stand have been summarily blown away.

Without ever appearing to be aggrieved, let alone paranoid, about his relative stature in jazz, vis-à-vis American alto-saxists, one of Britain's greatest-ever solo instrumentalists acknowledges that, realistically, being called a World Class Jazz Player is nothing more than a rather touching comment by a variety of admirers – here and abroad – including critics, fans, and fellow musicians alike. Indeed, it's the kind of situation that, sadly, might remain unchanged.

"I hear it from so many people. To me – for me – it creates very, very strange feelings inside, quite honestly. Obviously, it's wonderfully complimentary. At the same time, I don't feel I deserve it a lot of the time. Other times, I do think maybe they are right. I do work hard at what I do. I like to play, and I try to be original. I try to express myself in my playing. And I try to play well."

"But, then, you see it from another angle. You go to places where people don't even know you. Sometimes they say: 'How come we haven't heard of you before?' This happens in France a lot – which is wonderful. Because I don't know what to say to them. I think a lot of the fault probably lies with myself; not being of an outgoing nature, I've never been a born hustler . . . I mean, if I'm hustling now for the band (the Peter King Quintet or Quartet) it's because I feel I've got to – for the guys' sake as well as mine."

"And it's a good thing for me. So, that's probably part of the problem. Also, I haven't had records of my own until recent years, yet I've been on so many other people's records

over the years".

King is all-too-correct with regard to that final sentence. His fiery, intensely-creative, always-swinging alto (and for a period his tenor-saxophone, too) has graced all manner of jazz record dates. With other local heroes and bands such as Stan Tracey (5, 7, 8, 16), John Stevens (20), John Dankworth (2, 3), Tubby Hayes (5), Tony Kinsey (4, 17), and The Bebop Preservation Society (12, 13, 14). (King also played a basically 'straight' date, with Dankworth and the LPO – (1).)

And he has more than held his own throughout albums showcasing the artistry of distinguished Americans of the calibre of Philly Joe Jones (9), Jimmy Witherspoon (18), Hamp Hawes (10), John Eardley (15), Al Haig (19), Maynard Ferguson (11), and Red Rodney (13). Each of these – not to mention numerous other US players who have worked alongside King, or at least heard him blow in some context – have extolled his musical virtues.

Indeed, it was trumpeter Rodney who told the present writer a couple of years ago, with obviously genuine enthusiasm: "If Peter King lived in America – particularly New York – he'd be one of the leading stars on the jazz scene. He's got it all. He's musical. He's most proficient. He swings like a demon – real hard-bop school. He's got that natural growl in his playing – yet he's soft and beautiful when he wants to be."

"Pete is one of the world-class players. I have to use that term. It came from Bruce Lundvall, but it's a good term. Peter King is definitely that – I told him so when we worked together. It's different in America, but you don't get the same amount of recognition in Great Britain. Why, I don't know . . . it's strange, really, because in other things the British people – traditionally – have been always ultra-patriotic."

All of which makes it absolutely astonishing that someone as gifted as King – a significant contributor to the European jazz scene for over twenty-five years – has recorded but two albums under his own name. It is partly explained – again – by the somewhat bizarre attitude of local fans, some of whom seem to believe that British jazzmen must be considered, by definition, second-rate musical citizens, and so don't buy their albums. Yet even the most casual recourse to these rarities indicates just how important a soloist King has become during recent years.

The first (21) was taped at two different sessions – featuring two slightly different combos – in June and July of 1982. Typical of the leader's performances throughout is a spiralling, preaching contribution to his own

"Fourth Emergence", a fascinating, multi-faceted piece, with changing time signatures, et al. There's pure, unadulterated Bird-talk ("Confirmation"); a suitably passionate demonstration of his natural proclivity for the blues ("Blues For SJ", another PK original); leaping, muscle-bound, yet superbly logical performances that breathe new life into two jazz standards of the past twenty years ("Gingerbread Boy", "Dolphin Dance"). And, most intriguing of all, the title tune – recorded, on its own, almost a fortnight after the second session – which represents something of a new departure for him, on record at least. Featuring only his alto and John Horler's astute pianistics, this is virtually a free performance. As such, it is an unqualified success, with both musicians inspiring each other superbly. Yet as free as Horler and King become, individually and together, there is more than a trace of some definite structure about their playing which, for this listener anyway, ensures its overall triumph.

New Beginning, then, was something of a watershed for King as a recording artist. For it not only showcased his fully mature playing style in a thoroughly satisfying way, but it drew attention also to the fact that up to then the brilliance of his alto work had tended to overshadow his unjustly neglected writing skills.

The successor to *New Beginning* – likewise released on Spotify by the ever-perceptive (and courageous?) Tony Williams – was recorded, at one single session, at the end of January, '83. The "new" LP (22) was cut originally, not for Spotify release, but as a library music record. King and his (by now) regular rhythm section – John Horler, Spike Wells, Dave Green – were given a free rein at the date . . . excepting that all the material had to be original. Which is why three further interesting compositions by the leader are included.

If Peter King had performed exceptionally well for the *New Beginning* dates, it is equally true to suggest that he surpasses himself, in practically every way, throughout *East 34th Street*. "Reverse Thrust", for instance, finds him steaming through the chord changes, never lost for a second for ideas, at full emotional throttle. There is real beauty in his contribution to the session's solitary ballad ("Solitaire"). He is impressively relaxed for the title tune, yet executes double-time passages with sublime ease. There is a convincing demonstration of his ability to mix a touching tenderness with raw passion, during one solo ("¾ Piece", from his own pen), "Evans' Song". Horler's sensitive tribute to the late, great pianist, contains some dazzling, yet

PETER KING is Britain's unsung saxophone hero – under-rated, under-recorded but over here.



never excessive, alto. And he saves what is probably his finest playing for the album's final track, his own "Warm Breeze", responding with venomous swing and intense creative powers to his colleagues' dynamic Latin-cum-rock rhythms.

Even the essentially modest Peter King expresses a personal satisfaction with the overall results of both LPs, particularly the second.

When the next King album surfaces is conjectural. Tony Williams has one live session featuring the Quintet in the can, but there are no plans yet for its release. And who knows what might happen to another, older date which features King, fronting a different combo?

Whether or not Peter King's earnest desire to release one new record or more "in the near future" comes to pass, he has absolutely no need these days to provide further proof of his greatness. And his undoubted versatility as a musician *per se* has stood this former Melody Maker Jazz Poll-winner – he was also voted BBC Jazz Musician of the Year in '82 – in good stead. From time to time, he's managed to augment his often erratic jazz-playing existence with spells in the pit bands of successful West End shows like *Bubbling Brown Sugar* and *The Mitford Girls*. He has also toured several times with Sacha Distel, and even appeared in concert with Liberace!

Yet King – as a youngster he once had serious aspirations to become an aerodynamicist, before jazz struck and re-directed his life definitively – can hardly be said to make a comfortable living in 1985. Certainly not from performing the kind of music he loves so dearly. Still, during the past couple of years he's tended, he says, to feel a little more optimistic about the future than previously.

"Things have been a little better during the past two years... but, really, only marginally so. I still need to get the Quintet more – and that means more regular – work. That's one thing. Elsewhere, for me, I try to get a few more gigs than last year – at, say, the Bull's Head, Barnes. A couple of extra things out of town. Then, you (might) do a session. Maybe you get to do a show for a few months, or whatever."

"Somehow, you just struggle by... on overdrafts, and second-hand clothes, and such. It seems if you want to play jazz for a living – and I do – what else can you do...?"

Postscript: Later this month, Peter King will be participating in a studio project which celebrates ex-band-leader Vic Lewis' fiftieth year in the music business. It also features

Americans Jiggs Whigham, trombone, Shorty Rogers, trumpet/arranger/composer, and altoist/flautist Bud Shank. Lewis promises splendid big-band accompaniments that will involve also a host of local name jazz musicians. Release date for the anniversary disc is probably September.

Selected Discography

- (1) *Improvisations For Jazz Band & Symphony Orchestra* J. Dankworth/LPO (Society SOC 963)
- (2) *What The Dickens!* John Dankworth (Fontana (S) TL 5203)
- (3) *The Big Band Sound Of Johnny Dankworth* (Roulette 2334 021)
- (4) *How To Succeed In Business Without Really Trying* Tony Kinsey Quintet (Decca (S) KL 4534)
- (5) *Tubby Tours* Tubby Hayes Orchestra (Mole Jazz MOLE 4)
- (6) *We Love You Madly Stan Tracey Big Brass* (Columbia SCX 6320)
- (7) *Free At One* Stan Tracey Quartet (Columbia SCX 6385)
- (8) *Seven Ages Of Man* Stan Tracey Big Band (Columbia SCX 6413)
- (9) *Trailways Express* Philly Joe Jones Septet (Polydor/Black Lion 2460 142)
- (10) *Johnny Hawksworth Presents Anglo-American Jazz – Phase 1* (Feal Hampton Hawes) (Music De Wolfe DW/LP 3214)
- (11) *The World Of Maynard Ferguson* (CBS 64101)
- (12) *The Bebop Preservation Society* (Dawn DNLS 3027)
- (13) *Red Rodney & The Bebop Preservation Society* (Spotlite SPJLP7)
- (14) *The Pied Piper Of Hamelin* The Bebop Preservation Society (Spotlite SPJ500)
- (15) *Nameley Me* Jon Eardley Quintet (Spotlite SPJLP17)
- (16) *The Bracknell Connection* Stan Tracey Octet (Steam SJ103)
- (17) *Thames Suite* Tony Kinsey Big Band (Spotlite SPJ504)
- (18) *Big Blues* Jimmy Witherspoon (JSP JSP 1032)
- (19) *Bebop Lives* Al Haig Quintet (Spotlite SPJLP23)
- (20) *Freebop* John Stevens Sextet (Affinity AFF 101)
- (21) *New Beginning* Peter King Quartet/Quintet, Peter King-John Horler Duo (Spotlite SPJ520)
- (22) *East 34th Street* Peter King Quartet (Spotlite SPJ524)

With thanks to Alan Lur, Tony Williams

**Stan Britt waves the union jack
for the swinger who once played
with Liberace.**

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At Basin Street

HERE ARE very few records which celebrate the essential jazz virtues so triumphantly as *At Basin Street*. It is rich in passion, intelligence, swing and seemingly endless invention. Above all, it is one of only two studio albums recorded by the Brown/Roach quintet with Sonny Rollins (the other is *Sonny Rollins Plus Four*, Prestige S7821, recorded in March 1956), a coming together of three of the greatest musicians of their generation. Their collaboration was to be cut short by the death of Clifford Brown at the age of twenty-six in a car crash in which Richie Powell and his wife were also killed.

On both albums, the band shows that it was on the verge of opening up new directions for improvisation, escaping the impasse awaiting hard bop's increasing obsession with complex harmonic sequences, finding freedom within conventional structures, parallel to experiments in extended form by Charles Mingus and anticipating Miles Davis' much later use of "time no changes". At the same time, there is complete mastery of the technique and idiom of mature bop. Only Richie Powell, clearly unable to deal with the fast tempos of several of the numbers, disappoints. His positive contribution lies in his composition and arrangement, and his piano solos, other than those on "Time" and "The Scene Is Clean", are the only flaws on the album.¹

The Clifford Brown-Max Roach Quintet was formed late in 1954, and until December 1955 featured Harold Land on tenor. Records such as *Study In Brown* (Mercury 6336 708) demonstrate that this was an astonishingly fluent band, and confirmed that Brown possessed an unsurpassed technique. On *At Basin Street*, this can be heard in the effortlessness of the descent of over two octaves with which Brown's solo on "Gertrude's Bounce" opens and in the two-bar breaks in "I'll Remember April" and "What Is This Thing Called Love?". With the advent of Rollins, Clifford Brown began to grow into an altogether more profound musician, and the two developed an understanding which had synergic effect, each spurring the other on to greater expressive power. It was a working relationship, acquired through frequent gigging over a number of months. Rollins told Charles Fox in an interview for the BBC series *Jazzmen Talking* that at the time of Brown's death, "Brownie and I had just begun to play together as a two-horn group . . . we had just gotten to the point where we were breathing exactly together, and phrasing together".

At the time *At Basin Street* was recorded, that process of learning from and about one

At Basin Street (Mercury 6336 707)

Recorded: New York — 4 January, 16 and 17 February, 1956.

"What Is This Thing Called Love?"; "Love Is A Many Splendoured Thing"; "I'll Remember April"; "Powell's Prances"; "Time"; "The Scene Is Clean"; "Gertrude's Bounce".

**Clifford Brown (tpt); Max Roach (d);
Sonny Rollins (ts); George Morrow (b);
Richard Powell (p).**

another was already well underway. It is clear that, unlike many other hard bop albums, this was by a regular group, capable of an empathy not available in blowing sessions, however good those could be.

Rollins himself was undergoing significant changes as an artist at the time. *Saxophone Colossus* (Prestige 7079, June, 1956) marks the culmination of his earlier development, very much in the main lineage of post-Parker saxophonists, although "Blue Seven" shows his ability to create coherent large-scale structures within improvisation. On *At Basin Street*, he is at the beginning of a type of freer use of rhythm which was to occupy him until his withdrawal from the scene in 1959. This is perhaps best heard at the beginning of his solo on "I'll Remember April". Brown plays the changes breathtakingly and very fast. When Rollins enters, it's as though he's in a different world, playing within the changes but in a rhythm quite distant from the band's underlying pulse. He proceeds by motivic development, taking up fragments from Brown's solo and from the theme, and constructing longer statements from them, a method used extensively on "Blue Seven" and "Blues For Philly Joe" (on Neuk's *Time Blue* Blue Note BST 84001, 1958). In the freer context of a two with Wilbur Ware and Elvin Jones, Rollins showed how much potential there was in this method (*A Night At The Village Vanguard* Blue Note BST 81581, November 1957). Yet Rollins' bad treatment by the record company (two further LPs recorded at the same time were not issued until 1975) and his period of internal exile contributed to relative neglect at a time when Coleman, Coltrane, Davis and Mingus dominated the scene. But Rollins' insights constituted not so much a blind alley as a road taken.

The compositions on *At Basin Street* are for the most part standard forms. Powell's arrangements are propulsive — listen, for example, to the unison return of the two horns in "What Is This Thing Called Love?" with a counter-melody as strong as, but utterly different from, the theme. Three pieces, "I'll Remember April", "What Is This Thing Called Love" and "The Scene Is Clean" include introductions and codas which, like Miles Davis' compositions of c1964, are in rhythm but stay on a single chord, establishing great tension. There was nothing new about vamp in 1956 ("I'll Remember April" has one written into it), but here they are extended, potentially to considerable length although they are faded on the record. The horns and at times the rhythm section are free to improvise around fragments in a way which was unsettling at the time and which insidiously undermined the

hard bop aesthetic of long, sinuous lines. Both here and in Rollins' use of time throughout there is an incipient assertion of following the logic of the phrase rather than predetermined chord sequences.

And what of Max Roach? The old truths about his being the most melodic of drummers hold good here too. More than any other musician, Roach demonstrates the coherence of good drum solos — witness "What Is This Thing Called Love?", for example. His accompaniments are invariably essential to the texture of the music; he never just "plays time". Wayne Shorter said of playing with Tony Williams in Miles Davis' band, "It wasn't the bish-bash, sock-em-dead routine we had with Blakey, with every solo a climax".² Williams was very much a disciple of Roach in this respect, and it is Roach's subtlety and variation which has characterised his work since and has enabled him to collaborate with the likes of Shepp, Braxton and Cecil Taylor. Following the demise of the quintet, Roach went on to work with a series of small groups, fostering the careers of musicians of the calibre of George Coleman, Clifford Jordan, Julian Priester, Ray Draper and another trumpeter whose career was cut tragically short, Booker Little. But he is never heard to better effect than in his recordings with Clifford Brown.

It is fruitless to speculate what would have happened to jazz had this band survived. The loss of Clifford Brown at a time when, working alongside Rollins, he was finding new ways of using his technique, was irreparable and is surely part of the explanation for the relative eclipse of the trumpet (Davis excepted) in the following decade. In his short career, Brown made a considerable number of recordings. We can only be grateful that much of it is of the first order, and that *At Basin Street* is among the greatest recordings of the post-war era, a masterpiece only slightly flawed, at once fully achieved and pregnant with inspiration for the future.

Conrad Cork
Jeremy Crump

Footnotes

1. "Time" is a haunting piece, the only slackening of tempo on the album, Powell's solo on "The Scene Is Clean" is horribly marred by the jarringly vulgar of his last phrase, surely an unfortunate, unintentional slip. There are no bass solos on the record, George Morrow's function throughout, perfectly executed, is to provide continuo for the band, often requiring playing at great speed.
2. Ian Carr, Miles Davis, Quartet Books 1982, p.176.

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SOUNDCHECK



CELESTIAL COMMUNICATION

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Desert Mirage
(IACP 7004/5)

Recorded: Paris – 25-27 June 1982.

Itaru Oki, Jeff Beer, Serge Adam, Bernard Vitet (t); Michael Zwerin, Domenico Criseo (tbn); Francois Cotinaud, Georges Gaumont (ts); Philippe Sellam, Sebastien Franch (as); Henri Grinberg (ss); Karo (clt); Denis Colin (bs clt); Jean Querlier (cor ang, hautbois); Pierre Faure (fl); Carl Schlosser (f, picc); Aldridge Hansberry (f, alt f); Bruno Girard, Pascal Morrow (vn); Didier Petit (clo); Francis Gorge (g); Francois Leymarie, Antoine Mizrahi (el-bs); Rosine Feferman (bs); Jacques Marugg, Adrien Bitan (vib, marimba, timbales); Ron Pittner, Bernard Drouillet (d); Gilles Premel (perc).

This music – recorded by a thirty-strong band in a tiny studio during a heat wave – swelters. Silva's ensemble has a few familiar names but the atmosphere is more akin to a workshop session, trying out ideas, forming and breaking textures, clustering in strange unisons or parting to let a soloist foam out of the cloud.

Five compositions sprawl across four sides. There are moments when sections of the orchestra seem to hang ominously over a scuttling rhythm and solos beneath; passages when a flood of music suddenly bursts out of a period of calm, walls for a moment, then recedes into shadow as another shape takes precedence. Silva directs alchemically: he speed-edits or piles up sounds as he thinks fit. Usually, he's right. I'm transfixed by the twisting vortex of "February The Third" and the deep-throated bass of "After Coda".

No space to discuss detail or pull out the many fine soloists who make their play. The achievement of this densely fascinating set belongs to Alan Silva, who syntheses elements of chaos into a sound that could almost be visionary.

Richard Cook

CHARLES DAVIS

Super 80

(Nilva NQ3410)

Recorded: New York – 12

January 1982.

Charles Davis (ts); Gene Adler (p); Walter Booker (b); Michael Carvin (d).

RAY DRUMMOND

**Susanita
(Nilva NQ3409)**

Recorded: New York – 17/19 July 1984.

Manny Boyd, Bradford Marsalis (ts, ss); John Hicks (p); Ray Drummond (b); Alvin Queen (d).

Two discs that could serve as would-be exemplars of the current New York mainstream. Super 80 is a meat-and-potatoes session with a suitably big-sounding tenorman (though I'm not sure if this is the Davis who played baritone with Sun Ra and Steve Lacy): the programme is three originals plus "Chelsea Bridge", Kenny Dorham's "Una Mas" and Randy Weston's "Hi Fly", the last engagingly played as a languorous swagger. The leader operates in the style of Coltrane's Prestige period – phrases shaved off into split tones while shaped on an orthodox hard bop circuit – and it's amiable jazz, a club set faithfully transferred to a studio setting. At fast tempos he tends to noodle, but in a thoughtful "Chelsea Bridge" the tenor weighs the possibilities with honest endeavour.

If that kind of plain speaking isn't to your taste, Ray Drummond's mildly ambitious record may be more efficacious. The bassist is over-featured – three tracks, including a dull "I Can't Get Started", are no more than bass solos with rhythm – but his group is a meeting of virtuosos. Manny Boyd plays a finer soprano trail on the title tune but it's when twinned with Marsalis on the cussed swing of "Oh Jay" and "Learnin' And Preelin'" that the music ignites, two tenors pungent without resorting to undue rhetoric. John Hicks plays more than he has to, as usual, although with such an assertively driving drummer as Queen (who owns and runs Nilva Records) it all beds down into a purposeful momentum. In an unsuitable treatment of "Nardis" my ears were again drawn to Queen's immaculate brushwork – he's a good man to have in charge of recording this scene.

Richard Cook

DISTRICT SIX

Akuzwakale

(D 6 101)

Recorded: London – 1984.

Brian Abrahams (d); Mervyn Africa (p); Russell Herman (g,

voc); Harrison Smith (sax, flute); Ruthie Smith (sax and voc); Dill Katz (b); Jim Dvorak (tp).

Though District Six are carrying forward the firebrand ignited by The Blue Notes, Harry Miller and Dudu Pukwana, the sense of mission does, unfortunately, overpower them. A too broad musical topography is utilised at the expense of intensity and cohesion.

"Skokam" is perhaps the album's most successful piece. Kwele horns lead into an uptempo muscular improvisation wherein Jim Dvorak's trumpet and Harrison Smith's tenor are especially forceful. Abrahams' flaying sticks are reminiscent of Moholo and Africa's hard block chords hold the simple melody in a rhythmic grip.

The effect of "Skokam"'s brusque power is undone by what follows. "Dance Of The Lions" aims at a light dexterous mood but lacks bite – even Africa's richly expressive piano seems hindered emotionally.

"Owendo", dedicated by composer Africa to Nelson Mandela, sees him in a Dollar Brand/Ellington mood. It is a masterly homage to every black South African exile's true leader; though the piece is somewhat spoilt by Africa's Dyaniesque vocal acrobatics. The range of mood is wide, from fast angry passages to the hauntingly lyrical ones.

Apart from the title track – an old Zulu song touchingly sang – the other tracks lack centre and seem too often to just be opportunities for the instrumentalists to go through their paces. District Six have taken on more than they can cope with, though the LP has many excellent moments.

Charles de Ledesma

MARTY EHRLICH

The Welcome

(Sound Aspects SAS 002)

Recorded: New York – March 1984.

Marty Ehrlich (as, flt, clnt, b cint); Anthony Cox (b); Phereoan Ak Laff (d).

Marty Ehrlich has recorded with many of the most worthwhile names in the music and this album, his first as a leader, finds him in the company of two of the best musicians around, veterans of a great many sessions of this kind. But unfortunately the music never seems to take off.

All the compositions are originals and they all, with two exceptions, work within the rich vein of music instigated by a certain Texan altoist. The title piece finds Ehrlich demonstrating his undoubted ability on bass ▶

S O U N D

clarinet; however he finds the temptation to indulge in Dophiny-like squeaks in the upper register too great and consequently his contribution diminishes in terms of individuality.

His alto is heard on three tracks, "Hybrid", "Generosity" and "Stride". On this horn he displays a dry but humourless tone, not unlike a cross between Joseph Jarman and John Tchicai, but lacking the invention and incisiveness of either.

Only on "Lament (In Passing)" and "Dark Woods, Bright Sparks" is the adherence to all things Coleman-esque discarded. The former, a duet of flute and bass, features some lacklustre blowing by the leader who appears unwilling to respond to the more probing contribution of Cox. Consequently the piece sounds (to these ears at least) like two musicians playing at each other. The latter is arguably the best piece on the album; Ehrlich's clarinet explores the potential of the composition with good support from bass and drums.

One to be overlooked in favour of more inspired (and inspiring) music.

Nic Jones

from vastly-experienced West-coast bluesman Lowell Fulson. Best-known perhaps for his Chess hit "Reconsider Baby", a track which seemed to find its way onto every blues sampler album in the early Sixties, Fulson is a sophisticated blues stylist in the old tradition of urban blues, and these ten tracks are a timely reminder that he is very much alive and well.

Born in Tulsa, Oklahoma in 1921, Fulson moved first to Texas and then to the West Coast, and his style has many of the elements of country blues, fused with a smooth city feel.

RAY BARRETTO
Todo Se Va Poder
(Musica Latina JM 633)
Recorded: 1984.
Cali Aleman, Ray Saba
(singers); Chris Anderson, Wilson
Torres, Angel Fernandez (tpts);
Jimmy Bosch (tbn); Ricky
Gonzales (p); Danny Rosade (b);
Jimmy Delgado (timbales);
Carlito Soto (bongo); Ray
Barretto (conga); Felo Barrio
(chorus).

CHARLIE PALMIERI
A Giant Step
(Tropical Budda Records TBPL
003)

Recorded: 1984.
Bobby Rodriguez (b); Mike
Collazo (timbales); Johnny
"Dandy" Rodriguez (bongo);
Frank Malabe (conga); Charlie
Palmieri (p).

CACHAO
Dos Vol 2
(Salsoul SAL 4115)
Recorded: 1976-77.
Including — Israel "Cachao"
Lopez (wooden, as b); Julito
Collazo (vcl, perc); Charlie
Palmieri (p); Milton Cardona,
Gene Golden, Papaito, Frankie
Rodriguez, Osvaldo "Chiguagua"
Martinez (perc); Potato (congas);
Alfredo de la Fe, Felix "Pupi"
Lagarella, Yoko Matuso (vlins);
Nelson Gonzalez (tres guitar);
Jose Rodriguez, Barry Rogers
(tbns); Patricia Dixon (cello);
Alfredo "Chocolate" Armenteros,
Alejandro "El Negro" Vivar (tpbs).

LA INDIA DE ORIENTE
La Reina de la Guajira
(Caiman Records 9012)

Recorded: 1985.
Israel "Cachao" Lopez (b);
Juanito Marquez (g); Luis de la
Torre, Paquito Echavarria (p);
Mello Martinez, Nelson Padron
(perc); Tony Concepcion, Al
Degoyer (tpbs); Mike Balogh
(tbn); Abraham Norman, Jose
Aaron Martinez (vlns); Nestor
Torres (fit); Fernando Lavoy,
Gilberto Diaz (chorus); Gilberto
"Chino" Puentes, Claudio "Paye"
Moya, Carlos Puentes, Jesus

KEVIN EUBANKS

Sundance
(GRP GRP-A-1008)

Recorded: New York — 1984.

Kevin Eubanks (g); Tommy
Campbell (d); Barry Brown (elec
b); Gerry Etkins (synth, elec p).

This is a very disappointing album. Kevin Eubanks aroused interest in Britain in 1983 by his performances with the Mike Gibbs Orchestra. On the Electra Musician Young Lions album, he showed how well he could handle current jazz idioms alongside Chico Freeman, Wynton Marsalis and others. But Sundance has a remarkably dated aura — it sounds like mid-Seventies fusion music, which is ultimately what it is, right down to excessive use of the Fender Rhodes piano by Gerry Etkins.

The music is phenomenally proficient and very tight. The numbers, all Eubanks originals, are highly arranged, seemingly to the last intricate drum fit. Melodic invention is constrained by fussy structures, and there is limited harmonic and rhythmic range. Jazz thrives on the unexpected, on the interplay of pattern and freedom; this music sticks with the pattern.

There is no doubt a large audience for fusion and funk to whom this LP will be welcome, but for the present reviewer the title of the fourth track, "It's All The Same To Me", says it all.

Jeremy Crump

LOWELL FULSON

Think Twice Before You Speak
(JSP 1082)

Recorded: London —
September, 1984.

Lowell Fulson (vcl, g); Eddie C.
Campbell (g); John Altman
(saxes); Hammy Howell (p);
Wayne Elliott (b); John
Summer (d).

Recorded in London with a sympathetic backing group, this is an enjoyable session

It is this fusion of techniques that make Fulson's music unique, and this album, with its bare production, demonstrates the cross-fertilisation of influences very well.

The music may be a little relaxed for some tastes, but there is a deceptive quality to Fulson's style, for the gentle loping pace of many of these tracks packs an unexpected punch with repeated listening. His guitar work is pleasantly understated, yet he can say a lot with one telling phrase, the mark of an experienced campaigner.

Pedro Orta (conga-bata drum); La
India de Oriente (lead singer).

FRANKLIN BOUKAKA ET SES
SANZAS ET SON ORCHESTRE
CONGOLAIS
Survivance
(Gilles Salsa GS 8403 — twelve-
inch EP)

Recorded: 1967 and 1983.

No matter how hard the salsa community defends its independent and self-contained

RAY BARRETTO

stance, there are always individuals who relish roaming towards other genres, enriching the music with new slants, inflections and ideas.

The life-style, vitality and everyday relevance of salsa today has more in common with the funk and soul scene than jazz but the umbilical threads of improvisation have always delicately bonded salsa to jazz, and the easy passage of musicians between the two communities is an unchanging fact of life. It seemed perfectly apt for Dizzy Gillespie to guest with Ray Barretto's new band at a "Salsa Meets Jazz" night in New York last year. Dizzy has had a life-long affair with Latin music, of course; Ray Barretto's latest line-up of talented Puerto Ricans deftly fragmented the bars while Dizzy's long blasts cruised effortlessly over the top.

Todo Se Va Poder is Barretto's first with this new band; a welcome comeback to conventional salsa, after the blandness of his jazz-funk excursions (eg *La Cuna*). This album confirms that his talents lie as a tight band-leader rather than as a driving conga soloist, though his congas still twirl and reel between the bass and timbales. This is my idea of classic salsa — the record to lure a friend into its arms. The three fiery trumpeters inject just the right amount of urban shrillness, the hard-as-nails hembases adds a tough edge to the rhythms and, from the opening piano roll of "Prestame Tu Mujer", the tunes are

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Unusually this album includes two tracks of Fusion singing with just guitar backing, and here his Southern blues origins come over clearly, as he spins out some simple but effective lead lines over a tasteful chord backdrop courtesy of London-based Chicago blues guitarist, Eddie C. Campbell. Both these songs are raw and real, and capture the spirit of the man's music to good effect.

The band numbers too have the mark of authenticity. Over a simple bass/drums/guitar backing, Hammy Howell plays tasty piano fills

infectedly uptempo. Like New York City, this record never lets up, it's fresh and it's urgent, and Ray Barretto should congratulate himself on his best new band in ages.

A Giant Step refers to pianist Charlie Palmieri's comeback after a massive heart attack. It's a celebratory album of instrumentals, including a couple of ironic titles: Irving Berlin's "Be Careful, It's My Heart" and Palmieri's own exuberant "Start The World, I Want To Get On". There's also brother Eddie's "Muneca" and a tribute to an old boss, Tito Puente, whose "Fiesta A La King" opens the show.



Charlie has a gentler pair of hands than his brother. His style is deeply romantic, coloured by his classical training. His fluid improvisations reflect a long involvement in Latin jazz; his solos simply flow with personal reverence.

Like Dizzy, Charlie Palmieri coasts above the intricacies of the Cuban rhythms, while Eddie submerges himself in them, following or leading every contour. The lightness of a couple of tracks on this album may demand a devotee's ear; the piano occasionally approaches cocktail-bar background jazz. Many salsa albums feel obliged to include sweeteners; they're easy to skip (though I find them entrancing). "Start The World" leads you, unsuspectingly, from a gentle bass solo (from Tito Puente's bass-player, Bobby Rodriguez) into a furious percussion ferment. This is the track for the nation's jazz dancers.

"Charlie Palmieri gave me my first job in New York – when I needed it most." That quote, from Cuban double-bass player Israel "Cachao" Lopez, is a typical reminiscence about Charlie Palmieri. It refers to Cachao's arrival from Havana in the Sixties. He is a legend in his own right, accredited as the inventor of the mambo in the Forties, while playing in the Havanese band of Arcano. In the Seventies, he organised "descargas" – jam sessions – between Latin musicians. Volume Two of the descarga set brings

and John Altman's silky sax weaves around the melodies, creating a full sound which enables the leader to play as he feels. Fusion, though an economical guitarist, can stretch out when he needs to, as on "You're Gonna Miss Me", the album's final track, where he plays some crisp lines.

It is a pity we can't see artists of this quality regularly in the clubs, but sadly the chances are few and far between. In the meantime, we have brave releases like this to keep us going.

Tom Nolan

together musicians from over forty years of Latin music and, though nearly ten years old, still deserves attention. A joyful collection of elegant danzon-chas (close relation to cha-cha-cha) and rootsy percussion-and-voices guaro, with Cachao's own "Trombon Melancolico" – a tribute to the tones of that instrument. Elsewhere, a achily evocative danzon uses a violin quintet and wooden flute recalling Cachao'sheyday with charangas. Guests include Charlie Palmieri, Alfredo de la Fu, Pupi Lagarella who all made their mark in that style. An easy record to find, and a real gem.

Cachao reappears as bass-player on the most surprising record here. If you, like me, believed the popular mythology that salsa had only one woman star (Celia Cruz), this record will surprise you, too. The title, "Queen of the Guajira" – a kind of rural Cuban song – is elaborated, "known throughout the world as 'La India de Oriente'; and this handsome grey-haired woman who settled in Miami in 1960 (the year Celia Cruz also left Havana), beams from the sleeve. Luisa María Hernandez has a rich contralto. She wouldn't lose Celia any sleep but she has a fine, mature voice equally at home with the fast, jerky rumba, the stately danzon, and ballads, and even a commercial version of chants to Ogun, Shango, and other gods from the Cuban religious cult, santeria, accompanied only by congas and bongos and a decrepit piano.

It's impossible not to compare La India to Celia Cruz. Celia set a high standard; I'd say she was perfection. La India doesn't have Celia's range of either pitch or mood but, with this superb eighteen-piece band (three horns, two violins, a lovely tres-like guitar), this is an exciting record. The arrangements (by the pianist and guitarist), especially on "El Refran Se Te Olvido", are noticeably closer to soca than salsa – maybe this is the Florida sound reflecting the proximity of the Caribbean islands.

Bargin of the month, and anomaly of the batch, is Franklin Boukaka's twelve-inch EP (six tracks for around £2.50). Where else to review a collection of rumbas, cha-cha-chas and begumes, and three snatches of "Peanut Vendor"? But this record is not from Havana, New York, or even Florida. It comes from Brazzaville, Congo. And the instruments aren't the conventional tools of salsa: Boukaka has faithfully transposed the parts to local thumb pianos (sanzas – of different sizes and pitches), a guitar, a tenor sax and a drum kit. The result is a lush and languorous version of the authentic Cuban sound, with an added blues attraction from the sax player. Boukaka's record is a fascinating reminder of the musical trading between Africa and Cuba which has led to the new style of pop in Congo/Zaire, known as "new rumbas", today perfected by bandleaders like Franco and Souzzy Kassey. Sue Steward

LEE MORGAN Expoobident (Affinity AFF 134)

Recorded: Chicago – 13 October, 1960.

Lee Morgan (tpt); Clifford Jordan (ts); Eddie Higgins (p); Art Davis (b); Art Blakey (d).

Morgan was in the penultimate year of his first substantial association with The Jazz Messengers when *Expoobident* was recorded. Which explains the, as always, marvellously stimulating presence of that illustrious combo's leader.

Morgan's own playing throughout is suffused with his own individual brand of snap, crackle and pop – the Philadelphian could never be accused of lacking fire or a fierce attack. Listen to the way he surges into his solos on his own "Triple Track", and Higgins' fine, B-flat blues title tune. That he could also play in a more restrained quality can be easily ascertained by his sensitive reading of "Easy Living". And his skill with a mute is illustrated tellingly during a sparkling version of "Just In Time".



Davis' huge bass-sound, Blakey's propulsive drums, and Higgins' spare, driving piano are plus factors on all seven cuts. So, too, is the often under-rated Jordan, whose sinewy tenor – a kind of mainstream Trane – is present rewardingly on all but "Easy Living". He also contributes "The Hearing" and "Lost & Found", both interesting compositions.

Stan Britt

PAUL MOTIAN It Should've Happened A Long Time Ago (ECM 1283)

Recorded: Ludwigsburg – July 1984

Paul Motian (d, perc); Bill Frisell (g, g synth); Joe Lovano (ts).

Many of the ideas developed here first surfaced a short time ago. Motian's autobiographical *Pictures Of Maryam* (Soul Note SN1074) featured the same three musicians, plus Jim Pepper and Ed Schuller, exploring similar musical territory in, if anything, a more dynamic and varied manner.

In both cases, the sound is distinctive, relying on Bill Frisell's lush harmonies, with generous use of chorus echo, behind Motian's

S O U N D

slow-moving, broad themes. Lovano, a man with some mileage behind him with Woody Herman, Mel Lewis and Carla Bley, is very much in a Coltrane mould. His playing is at once sharp-edged and rhapsodic. Mohan, as befits a drummer of his pedigree, takes full advantage of the space left by the absence of a bass and, as in his Bill Evans recordings of twenty five years ago, his is an equal voice throughout.



Most of the tracks have the haunting quality which makes it impossible not to refer to the label's house style, but this is not just another ECM record. The title track has a folksy melody, reminiscent of the music of John Surman. If there are regrets about the album, it is that the compositions do not allow sufficient scope for the trio to show their prowess in more strictly metric music, revealed just once on the track "Fiasco".

Jeremy Crump

MAGGIE NICOLS, LINDSAY COOPER, JOELLE LEANDRE Live At The Bastille (Sync Pulse 1789)

Recorded: L'Ancienne Gare de la Bastille, Paris – March 25, 1982.

Maggie Nicols (vc); Lindsay Cooper (bsn, electric bsn, soprano); Joelle Leandre (dbl bs).



The sleeve of this LP shows Nicols, Cooper and Leandre as incendiaries; needles clicking away to a backdrop illustration of the storming of the Bastille. The collapse of ancien-

regimes? A knitting together of new sounds, new values? Are these the promises of a feminist improvised music?

There's no space here to explore all the likely ramifications (and contradictions), but there is a partial confluence of interests between feminism and improvised music: both (to put it simply) are about grasping new kinds of freedom, both offer radical critiques of prevailing ideas as to what is real/possible/desirable. The link is best exemplified in their preferred ways of working – a common emphasis on interdependence, spontaneity, operating outside of pre-determined structures – and in the fact that more and more women are playing improvised music.

Live At The Bastille suggests why this is. It's one of the most accessible and good-humoured of improvised music recordings, thanks mainly to Maggie Nicols' madcap scatting and impromptu lyrics. Snippets of pop songs, anecdotes about her neighbours, bits of conversation all make clear, in a very funny way, the relationship between her music and her everyday life: so perhaps the feminist dictum that *the personal is the political* can be extended to include *the musical* too. Which would be a useful demystification of what is generally thought of as merely "weird music".

Just as Nicols' voice encompasses singing and scatting, so Cooper and Leandre can play their instruments as "traditional" virtuosos or to elicit sounds like a creaking door, according to the needs of the moment. Responsiveness and flexibility are prime requirements of such music, and the trio's rapport on this record is rooted (of course) in their individual sensibilities, but possibly too in a shared political perspective that values precisely this kind of mutual support.

The nine tracks here are remarkable for their tender ad hoc wit and some excellent playing. But *Live At The Bastille* is also exciting for the way it works: music as a paradigm of political vision and vice versa – sound that's ideologically sound too!

Graham Lock

JAY OLIVER Dance Of The Robot People (Konnex ST-5003)

Recorded: Paris – 9/10 December 1981.

Glenn Ferris (tb); Steve Lacy (ss); Jay Oliver (b); Oliver Johnson (d).

I am unable to decipher the LP's subtitle "There Is No Such Thing As An Ex-Actor", unless it's a spectacular piece of self-deprecation. Certainly Oliver takes a fairly demure role here, leaving most of the character building to Lacy and Ferris – and the results closely resemble the sort of things expected of a session led by the saxophonist. Knotty melodies are stated and dismissed quickly, the players then turning to improvisations which are what each man makes of them. "In The Dishroom" – apparently an ironic reference to the necessity of keeping a dayjob – whilst everybody together into an argument full of extravagant remarks. But it's hardly a truly collective music.

The best moments arrive at the end of "Winter Day, Spring Night". After a theme that recalls "You'd Be So Nice To Come Home To", Ferris displays a melancholy affection for

LOL COXHILL Instant Replay (Nato 25/32)

Recorded: Various locations in France, and Digsowell House, Welwyn Garden City, Herts, England – between November 1981 and September 1982.

Lol Coxhill (ss, vcl); Joelle Leandre (b); Christian Rollet (d); Paul Rutherford (tbn); Annick Nozati (vcl); Sven-Ake Johansson (perc, vc, accordion); Louis Sclavis (ss, b cl); Mishka Mengelberg (p); Emmanuel Bex (org, p); Xavier Jouvelot (d); Raymond Boni (g); Jacques Berrocal (tp); Rakan-Dun (cornet, vcl); Tony Coe (crt); Bagad de Kemperie (bagpipes); La Chantenayenne orchestra – with arrangements by Yves Rochard.

LOL COXHILL The Dunois Solos (Nato 95)

Recorded: Dunois Theatre, Paris, France – 6 November, 1981.

Lol Coxhill (ss).

LOL COXHILL Couscous (Nato 157)

Recorded: Chantenay-Villedieu, France – 2 September, 1983.

Lol Coxhill (ss) with The Hot Love Band (Alan Tomlinson (tbn); Phil Minton (tp); Steve Beresford (euphonium); Jac Berrocal (tp); Sylvia Hallett (vn); Sue Ferrar (vn); Georgie Born (cello); Mike Cooper (g); Peter Boni (as); Fred Van Hove (p); Joelle Leandre (b); Roger Turner (perc); Veryan Weston (p)); The Chantenay Quartet; (Coxhill, Born, Leandre [as above] and Beresford (p)) and The Recedents: (Coxhill (ss, vcl, drum machine, casio and small synth); Mike Cooper (g & electronic treatments); Roger Turner (perc & electronics)).

THE MELODY FOUR Love Plays Such Funny Games (Chabada/Nato OH6)

Recorded: La Butte aux Oies, Tasse, France – 19-20 June, 1984.

Lol Coxhill (ss, vcl); Tony Coe (crt, ts, vcl); Steve Beresford (p, euphonium, vcl).

Coxhill's continuing vinyl tirade courtesy of this enterprising French label is like classic soap-opera – characteristically steadfast, but with the required twists and turns in the scripting to keep it fresh and alive. He matches a child-like eagerness and sense of

inquisitiveness with a maturity of control and depth of style. His sharp, ready tones and sello-like darting and wriggling provide for one of the most compulsive and distinctive of post-Cottrane voices, while the detail in his playing oozes melody.

The *Dunios Solos* is quintessentially Coxhill – at first bouncy and lustful with plenty of self-generated friction, then agonizedly searching and introspective. Like Evan Parker's *Monoceros* (*Incus*), it allows the listener little time or space for deliberation; you're invariably carried along by the flow, albeit here a more toruous one. Yet Coxhill himself is also very much the tenuis among the field of contemporary horn-players – some dub his approach as a radical redefinition of "free" improvising, while others could reasonably argue his merits as the maverick traditionalist. Coxhill arrived on the scene atop from behop – and on Side One, it shows.

The groupough couldn't be more different. *Couscous* goes from the aurally low-h-scht of *The Recedents*, an electro-acoustic improvising trio not unlike AMM-with-warts, through the chamber-like improvisations of the Chantey Quartet, to a re-tread of the twenties – a pseudonymous "Buck Funk" traces the form while a later grouping of improvisers extend the mood of New Orleans dirges. *Instant Replay* is, by comparison, a comedy of sharp one-liners – Gershwin meets small-time Ellington, the music of mass pipes and brass ensembles and the jarring contrasts of collective improvisations. Bassist Joeie Leandre provides some jagged-edged interplay on the opening cut; Misha Mengelberg's piano makes off with Ellington's "Caravan", while Coxhill's meeting with organist Emmanuel Bex and drummer Xavier Jauquel is like cheap Butlins-style dancehall chic.

On the Melody Four's *Love Plays Such Funny Games*, the seeds of subversion are planted deeper, and in less widely scattered grounds. To the victim of a wickedly planned blind date around the turntable, this could be a reclaimed treasure from the age of the Romantics; this seemingly gentle stroll through the pastures of Carmichael, the Gershwines (again) and Rodgers & Hart, with its nippings pools of sentiment and Steve Beresford's pastoral piano accompaniments. But the way is increasingly littered with traps; Coe's voice talkers on Henry Mancini's "Mr Lucky", while the Coxhill-penned "I Feel Romantic" is the classic wind-up which sends Prince Charming back to his frog-like state with the immortal line "I love you so, you saucy little baggage".

David Ilic

GARY BURTON *Something's Coming* (RCA NL 89377)

Recorded: New York – 14 February, 14/16 August 1963.

Gary Burton (vib); Jim Hall (g); Chuck Israels (b); Larry Bunker (d); (four tracks only) Burton (vib); Jack Sheldon (t); Monty Budwig (b); Vernel Fournier (d).

Real Life Hits
(ECM 1293)
Recorded: Ludwigsburg –

November 1984.

Gary Burton (vib); Makoto Ozone (p); Steve Swallow (b); Mike Hyman (d).

A pleasant memory persists of Gary Burton playing "Crystal Silence", alone at the RFH, the lines flowing like the tendrils of an overgrown creeper. Nobody's ever made the vibes so glassily kaleidoscopic. Yet Burton's always tried to graft austerity and blood into a style that remains helplessly romantic. You can hear it already in *Something's Coming*, one of his first LPs, reissued here with four extra tracks. His reading of ballads like "Little Girl Blue" and "Summertime" is decorous but self-absorbed – he dances the melody into a corner – and it's in more abstract pieces like the Mike Gibbs themes "Melanie" and "Six Improvisatory Sketches" that his mind is most alert. These tunes are dry and small, presented as chaste variations on Jimmy Giuffre's work, and they sound thin beside Bobby Hutcherson's recordings from these years. But Burton had contrary spirits inside him on "Hello Young Lovers", in wry partnership with Jack Sheldon, he swings as hard as Lionel Hampton.

Where Hutcherson merely went soft, Burton has sculpted his romance. His taste for tunes as bewdy as those of Carla Bley might be the scholar's thrill with passion. "Syndrome" and "Real Lite Hits" from the ECM set are typically broken-backed Bley themes: Burton dashes into an exciting solo in "Syndrome" and piano end bass tail away before the twirling array of grace notes. Such improvisations impress without being especially purposeful, and it's in quieter areas that Burton's mature style shows an advance on his youthful music. John Scofield's "The Beatles" comes full of lyrical suspensions that the vibes, bass and piano linger over, each player taking the lead in turn, and Ellington's "Fleuriette Africaine" (which reminds of how much of the master is waiting to be rediscovered), despite rhythmic exaggerations that don't work, is an interesting stab at caravanning Duke through Europe.



One dilemma hasn't changed: just as Burton's early groups were featureless vehicles for him, so his current quartet is a little too drab. They might make him play a little faster, they don't cut him off short. Both records are rewarding but they need a patient editorial ear.

Richard Cook

a "proper" syntax – here's a free player who might do best being a grouchy hardbopper – and Lacy negotiates some favourable crannies with his best aplomb. It pads towards silence before they remember to restate the theme

Richard Cook

ROCKIN' SIDNEY

Boogie, Blues And Zydeco
(Krazy Kat KK 787)

Recorded: Crowley, Louisiana – 1982.

Sidney Semien (vc), accordion, harmonica); Katie Webster (p); Thomas Shreve (g); Willie Trahan (sax); Mark Miller (elec b); Warren Storm (d).

Even in his native Louisiana, Rockin' Sidney Semien is not a big star. Rather, he's a trouper who's cut good records steadily for twenty-odd years, notching up one big hit ("No Good Woman") and several smaller ones along the way. Now in his early forties, he's still plugging away round the Louisiana dance hall circuit and still recording regularly for Floyd "Swallow" Solleau's *Maison De Soul* and other labels.

If Sidney is ever going to break through to a wider public, this is the album which will achieve it for him. One day late in 1982, he and a band of Louisiana's finest hit Crowley's Master-Trak Studio and laid down a set which exudes as much feeling, cohesive playing and sheer charm as anything which the state has produced in the last ten years.

Despite his flashy nom-de-guerre, Sidney is not a particularly charismatic musician. He's a pleasant, warm-voiced singer, a melodic accordionist and a so-so harp player. But he does have damably good taste: his choice of musicians and songs is for the most part impeccable.

As promised by the title, the album serves up a mélange of styles associated with Louisiana. Most of the songs are Sidney compositions, and they fit comfortably within the local musical tradition while having a modern sound thanks to the sympathetic (but not light-handed) drummer Warren Storm. The very first track, "Cochon De Lait", a tuneful piece of zydeco extolling the virtues of barbecued sucking pig, sets the scene for what is to come: a lively atmosphere, empathetic musicianship and a robust but relaxed sound.

There's plenty of variety in the selections: "Slim's Y-Kee-Kee" is an updated version of the swamp blues which were recorded in profusion in Crowley twenty years ago, "She's My Morning Coffee" is a spirited boogie, while "Shirley Jean" is based on the definitive Louisiana ballad "Mathilde", surviving a startling chord change to emit churning charm. To single out highlights is difficult, since the LP maintains a high standard; it's easier to single out the one low point, "Boogie For Me", a rather tired soul workout.

The warm, supple piano of Katie Webster is immaculate throughout, saxman Willie Trahan takes some steady but satisfying solos, and guitarist Tommy Shreve is derivative but versatile, ranging from bottleneck to Chuck Berry.

Much more than the sum of its parts, this is an album which anyone with even half an ear for Creole music would do well to investigate.

Mike Atherton

S O U N D

SPACE
An Interesting Breakfast Conversation

(1970 Arch Records S-1806)

Recorded: two tracks live at New York's Public Theatre — no other data.

Roscoe Mitchell (ss, as, bass s); Tom Buckner (extended voice); Gerald Oshita (straight as, ts, baritone s, contrabass sarrusaphone).

Roscoe Mitchell's explorations of space and sound have given us some of the most fascinating music of the last two decades. After the diversity of his *Seventies* projects, his recent work on record (outside of The Art Ensemble Of Chicago) has centred on two small units, the five-piece Sound Ensemble and the trio Space.

Whereas their debut *New Music For Woodwinds And Voice* employed both composed and improvised music, this new Space LP is given over to group improvisation. The results are engrossing: particles of sound dance in the air as timbre, texture and tone are examined with minute care.

The trio's range extends from the busy chatter of the title track to the lazy exchange of hums and whispers on "Live At The Public Theatre 1", the "fullest" and "emptiest" tracks respectively on what is generally — and aptly — a very spacious record. But space is all part of the dynamic here: this is a music of subtle tensions, ebb and flow, happy collisions. There is also the (comparatively) rarity value of Roscoe Mitchell blowing bass saxophone on "Journeys", a track with surprisingly lyrical inclinations.

Both Mitchell and Oshita are supple players, able to use extremities of register with no sense of strain. Buckner's wordless vocals can sing like the horns, but he also uses whirrs, whooshes, hiccups, in his battery of sounds. If at times he's reminiscent of a cool Phil Minton, this music operates in a very different context from the more representational and often rawly emotional music with which Minton is associated.

The drama in this Space music comes instead from their creation of a new sound language. Free music, very like the New Physics, is making new sense of things following the breakdown of an old order: the solid, three-dimensional world of harmony, rhythm and melody has been succeeded by the contingent, relative values thrown up in the wake of experimenters like Coleman, Ayler, Braxton, Bailey and Mitchell. Certainly, Mitchell's work, from the "colours" of "The Little Suite" through the "sound collages" of "L-R-G" to this latest LP, has taken us into ever richer, stranger modes of enquiry.

It could be that we're on the verge of a new musical dimension, a new interplay of sound, space and time, the twists and turns of which are still being mapped by Roscoe Mitchell's Space explorations.

Graham Lock

(as); John Lee (b); John Blake (vn); Wilby Fletcher (d).

McCoy Tyner carved a place for himself in the annals of jazz history as an accomplished and responsive pianist in the company of John Coltrane. However, with the series of albums he recorded for Milestone during the early and mid-Seventies, he reworked the Coltrane legacy, employing its welling passion to accommodate his own needs, emerging along the way as a significant talent in his own right.

Now the question arises of what Dimensions — his debut album for Elektra Musician — adds to that. Unfortunately, as with some of his later Milestone albums, the answer is not a great deal.

The group works impressively together over a series of compositions supplied by three of the quintet in addition to Tyner himself and Ellington. But it is only on Tyner's "One For Dea" and Lee's "Understanding" that the music is fuelled by the strength characteristic of the leader's best music-making. Although his solo examination of Ellington's "Prelude To A Kiss" uncovers fresh attributes and avenues in a familiar theme.

Thus Dimensions cannot be said to be a landmark in Tyner's career by any means. However, at its best it demonstrates that he has not lost his capacity to move and excite, and for that alone we should, perhaps, be grateful. It will not disappoint collectors amongst his followers.

Kenneth Ansell

DINAH WASHINGTON
The Fats Waller Songbook
(EmArcy B18 930-1)

Recorded: New York — October, November 1957.

Dinah Washington, voc, with Orchestra arr/cond by Ernie Wilkins, inc Eddie Chamblee (ts, voc); Charlie Shavers (tp); Jimmy Cleveland (tbn); Jack Wilson (p); Charlie Persip (d).

Just in case anyone should be in any doubt Dinah Washington remains one of the all-time great jazz singers. (That she was also a great blues singer, could handle R&B and pop with equal aplomb, are other factors which should never go unnoticed by those claiming to be discerning patrons of the vocal art.)

Proof-positive of this is the welcome reissue of an album formerly known as *Dinah Washington Sings Fats Waller*. The combination of the totally irremovable Washington voice and a collection of Waller (or Waller-associated) songs makes for good sense. And a star-studded studio big band, arranged and conducted by the eminently gifted Ernie Wilkins, was certainly an extra brainwave of producer Bob Shad's.

Part of Washington's unique vocal gift was that, despite a basically declamatory style, she usually managed to sound almost ridiculously relaxed. As evidenced here, particularly, on such titles as "Ain't Misbehavin'", "Squeeze Me", "Black & Blue", "I Ain't Nobody's Business If I Do", and "Keepin' Out Of Mischief Now". Hubby-at-the-time Eddie Chamblee takes several high-toned tenor solos (not quite as raunchy as elsewhere), and joins the Queen, vocally speaking, for "Honeysuckle Rose" and "Everybody Loves My Baby"; not at all bad.

Repertoire is well-chosen — even if the inclusion of "Someone's Rocking My Dreamboat" is strange (Fats neither wrote, nor recorded the song). Only criticism concerns either the cutting or pressing, which results in annoying sibilance on several cuts (eg "Christopher Columbus").

Stan Britt

RANDY WESTON
Blue

NEW YORK ART QUARTET

Mohawk

(Fontana 881 009 ZY — reissue)

Recorded: NYC — 16 July, 1965.
 John Tchicai (as); Roswell Rudd (tbn, tnr-hrn); Reggie Workman (b); Milford Graves (d).

NEW YORK CONTEMPORARY FIVE

Consequences

(Fontana 881 013 ZY — reissue)

Recorded: NYC — 23 August, 1963.

John Tchicai (as); Archie Shepp (ts); Don Cherry (crmt); Don Moore (b); J.C. Moses (d).

JOHN TCHICAI — ARCHIE SHEPP QUARTET

Rufus

(Fontana 881 014 ZY — reissue)

Recorded: as above.
 Musicians as above, but omit Don Cherry.

That these albums were recorded twenty years ago doesn't matter; the music is good enough to transcend mere historical interest. Because, like Parker's Dial recordings or Coltrane's Impulse sides, they offer us the eternal truths found in self-discovery, a sense of urgency and joy which can't be faked, and the first rush of excitement in finding something new and relevant. In short, these records give us a sense of living history.

Made in the wake of the October Revolution and the Jazz Composers' Guild's attempts at self-sufficiency and consciousness-raising, these discs also reflect the growing political awareness of the times. If the music springs from the need to express individuality and spontaneously, it must stand opposed to any political system which functions at the expense of these values. Titles such as "Banging On The White House Door" and "Funeral" (dedicated to Medgar Evers) remind us of the inevitable link between the personal and the political. The music itself attempts to bring the individual and the group into harmony.

The New York Contemporary Five were together for a very short time, even by jazz standards. Consequences, their first record, was done at the end of August, 1963, and their last, one LP side for Savoy, at the beginning of February, 1964. In those roughly four months, they made as many records, all of which rank among the best in the art form.

Consequences doesn't have the headlong feeling of their live records, which benefitted

McCoy Tyner
Dimensions
(Elektra Musician 960 350-1)

Recorded: New York — October 1983.

McCoy Tyner (p); Gary Bartz

C H E C K

(1750 Arch Records S-1802)
Recorded: Seattle, Washington
- March 1983.
Randy Weston (p).

Though he was Brooklyn-born-and-bred, Randy Weston's music has always swung with an African heartbeat. From early titles like "Zulu" and his 1960 *Uhuru Africa* suite to later records like *African Cookbook* and *African Nite*, Weston has repeatedly celebrated the

culture of his ancestors as well as documenting his own trips to the continent (which include a six-year stay in Morocco).

Blue, his first LP for several years, maintains that tradition with references to Nigeria, Tunisia and Ghana and bears the subtitle, "African Rhythms". But there's a strong Afro-American presence too: Duke is honoured on "Ellington Tusk"; Monk often alluded to, particularly on a new version of "Earth Birth", while the blues remain a

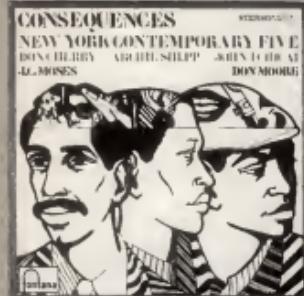
further and further from his initial premise. Shepp's solo is a collage of more dramatic contrasts and shifts, held together by his urgency and romantic tone. "Nettus" features one of Archie's soulful, slurred end growing medium tempo outings. "For Helved" is the album's highlight. Tchicai warms his phrases, modifying them with displaced accents and shifting tone colors. Shepp bursts with passion and energy throughout. "Funeral" is an interesting failure, an attempt at collective improvisation which has brilliant individual parts, but never quite coheres. The interplay is on the simplest action - reaction level, rather than a simultaneous-intuitive level. Like the NYCS, they were at their best when maintaining the horns-rhythm section hierarchy inherent from bebop.

Mohawk is simply a masterpiece, one of the great records of the years between 1958 and 1968 which constitute "the Sixties". The title cut is among the most radical rethinking of bebop ever done. The bop format is altered in favour of a collective variation on the tune which segues seamlessly into the solos, creating a unified whole without the abrupt contrast between head and solo. Drummer Millard Graves redirects the energy of the beat, broadening it with polyrhythm and implying new directions for the music to go in. "No. 6" is another good example of their unequalled integration of written material and improvisation. The composition establishes a push-pull rhythm of activity followed by a brief pause. The group maintains this pulse as the structure for the improvisation, sometimes moving together, sometimes moving deliberately out of phase. Performances like this and the equally disciplined "Banging On The White House Door" result in a wonderfully coherent, organic music.

Perhaps the break with tradition wasn't as radical as legend would have us believe. On these albums you'll find compositions in tempo, arrangements of Monk tunes, standards. And let's return to the critical gripe about not playing songs and rembling on too long. Posthumous releases of the Clifford Brown-Max Roach quintet recorded eight years previous to these albums contain thirty-minute versions of some tunes. Since the LP offered the artists the chance to stretch out for up to half an hour, obviously tune length on these discs was deliberately kept by the artists to modest limits.

While the outward structure of the music did change at the beginning of the Sixties, the inner spirit remained the same. As Tchicai says in the liner notes to Mohawk, "The musicians still has to abide to the rules of ethical responsibility . . . the content (the feeling) must always be there (passion, energy, lyric, strength)".

Ed Hazell



The young Archie Shepp shows the benefit of his tenure with Cecil Taylor and his interest in Coltrane. There are no simply copied lines from these men, but a similarity of approach due to commonly held interests. In contrast to Tchicai, Shepp has a stormier, more engaged approach. And of course there is a strong family resemblance between son Archie's tone and the tones of father Ben Webster and uncle Coleman Hawkins.

Tchicai draws on the ancient wisdom of Africa and the music of Cecil Taylor for his inspirations. At this time he cited Taylor as a greater influence on him than Ornette, which might seem surprising if all you focus on in Cecil's music is the energy level. Tchicai worked with the intervals in Cecil's melodies and used them with generous amounts of space, leaving doors open for other players to enter into the celebration. Few other players since have taken this approach to Taylor's music and it remains a largely unexplored legacy of the era's music.

Rulus features the New York Contemporary Five, minus Don Cherry. On the title cut, Tchicai begins by alluding to the melody, but gradually his line of reasoning takes him

pervasive influence. Indeed, Weston's music has grown more sombrely blue over the years, a process exemplified here by "The Last Day", a tune which contemplates the end of the world in a mood of quiet foreboding.

If Weston's greatest strength is his rhythmic power, shown here in the spongy "Penny Packer Blues" and a ringing tribute to "Lagos" (another old favourite revisited), Blue impresses too with its calm authority, its air of doughty reflection. Weston's music can sometimes sound ponderous and/or long-winded, but here discipline - and a lighter touch - are adhered to. Still, the LP, as befits its title, remains a sober work: this Blue is a deep one.

Graham Lock

WORKING WEEK

Working Nights

(Paladin/Virgin V 2343)

Recorded: London - 1984.
Julie Roberts (voc); Simon
Booth (g); Larry Stabbins (sax,
flute) plus many others.

A reading of Working Week which seeks to isolate them as a "soul" or a "jazz" band is misleading. They are neither one nor the other. Neither are they samba, Afro-Cuban or cocktail folk. What they are is a little bit of all of these, their music served up as a pot-pourri of International flavours with an aroma that's distinctly their own.

Along with this LP you get a twelve-inch single as a bonus: "Stefia Mania" is a wider, less orchestrated, and largely spontaneous affair, a piece of music built up around a workshop riff and given form on vinyl by the addition of Last Poet Jalaf's post-hallucinatory rap. Its musical highlights, though, are a squeaking dialogue between percussion (Bosco D'Olivera), voice (Julie Tipperts) and soprano sax (Stabbins), and an earlier moment when Harry Beckett's trumpet is moulded like plasticine around Julie's voice.

"Inner City Blues", written by Marvin Gaye, commences with some tough Philly sax, but before long strings dilute the beginning's funky promise. Roberts' voice, though, treats the song admirably, swooping through nuance and swaying through mood. The seven-piece horn section indicate the band's jazz tendencies when they close the song with some fat ensemble playing. "Sweet Nothing", in contrast, is too small a concept for a band with such wide parameters. Roberts' voice towering over a phlegmatic drumbeat. Likewise "Who's Rocking Who" marnes fidgety jazz vocal with catchy pop refrains.

The rest of the album comprises "I Thought I'd Never See You Again", which has a weak vocal part but a magnificent Spanish bass melody; "Autumn Boy", a folksy ballad, Roberts' vocal giving way to a wonderfully toriont Stabbins soprano; and "Be Care No Pay", which reverts to the Latin groove, salsa piano (Kim Burton) leading into Cuban-style horns and punchy Annie Whitehead trombone. Working Week's first single "Venceremos" is also included; built up around a bossa nova rhythm, it features Dave Bittel's luscious clarinet.

Working Nights is a laudable debut album, original by virtue of its brave fusion of styles and its maturity of arrangement.

Charles de Ledesma

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3.

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10.

ALTERATIONS; ARMSTRONG'S WEST END BLUES; ANN BARKER; BLACK MASKA; WHITE MASKA; ART BLAKEY; BOBETOMAGUS; JAZZ AT THE PHIL reissues; HUGH MASEKALA; THelonious Monk; JERRY WEXLER

11.

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12.

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LOUIS ARMSTRONG: *The Armstrong Legend Vol 2 (1926-27)* (EMI EG2604561)

CHEB BAKER: *Mister B* (Timeless SJP192)

BILL BARON: *Variations in Blue* (Muse MRS306)

COUNT BASIE: *Autumn in Paris* (1957) (Magic AWE13); *Count On The Coast Vol 2* (1958) (Fantastic PHONT755)

BIX BEIDERBECKE: *The Studio Groups* (1927) (EMI EG2605271)

ACKER BILK: *Unissued Acker* (1957) (Harlequin HQ3004)

BOB BROOKMEYER: *And Friends* (1964) (CBS 21123)

BIG BILL BROONZY: *Big Bill's Blues* (Thirties) (CBS 21122)

LES BROWN (w/DORIS DAY): *Rhapsody In Blue* (early Forties) (Big Band Era 20134)

GARY BURTON: *Real Life Hits* (ECM 1293)

DANIEL COBBIE: *Dilettation* (Ulysse Musique AROC50405); *Ayanansa* (AROC50102)

KEN COOLY: *The Decca Years* (1955-59) (Lake LA5001)

COMPANY (URSULA OPPENS/FRED FRITH/GEORGE LEWIS et al): *Epiphany* (Incaus 46/47)

CHICK COREA: *Voyage* (ECM 1282)

LARRY CORYELL: *Comin' Home* (Muse MRS303)

SONNY CRISS: *Memorial Album* (1947-65) (Xanadu 200)

CHARLES DAVIS: *Super 80* (Niliva NJQ3410)

DUKE ELLINGTON: *Night Train* (late Forties/early Fifties) (Big Band Era 20132)

ROL ERICSSON: *Stockholm Sweetnin'* (Dragon DRPL78)

TAL FARLOW: *The Legender* (Concord CJ266)

JEFF GARDNER: *Spirit Call* (Ulysse Musique AROC50203)

HERB GELLER: *Hot House* (Circle RK241184/30)

STAN GETZ (w/ASTRUD GILBERTO): *Getz Au Go Go* (1964) (Verve 2304173)

EGBERTO GISMONTI & NANA VASCONCELOS: *Dusa Vozes* (ECM 1279)

STEPHANE GRAPPELLI & STUFF SMITH: *Violins No End* (1957) (Pablo 2310907)

DAVE GRUSIN: *One Of A Kind* (GRP GRPA1011)

LIONEL HAMPTON: *Flying Home* (1953?)

(Big Band Era 20129)

COLEMAN HAWKINS: *Jazz Tones* (1954) (Xanadu 195)

MILT JACKSON: *If I Don't Mean A Thing* (Pablo 2310909)

KHAN JAMAL/JOHNNY DYANI/PIERRE DORGÉ: *Three* (Steeplechase SCS1201)

HARRY JAMES: *September Song* (1948?) (Big Band Era 20133)

LENA JANSSON: *Pay Some Attention To Me* (Bluebell BELL177)

STAN KENTON: *In Berlin 1953* (Duke D1022)

MORGANA KING: *Portraits* (Muse MRS301)

KIRK LIGHTSEY (w/CHET BAKER): *Every-*

thing Happens To Me (Timeless SJP176)

HUMPHREY LYTTLETON: *Tribute to Humph Vol 2 (1950-51)* (Doorhouse DM2)

DAVE McKENNA: *The Key Man* (Concord CJ261)

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JACO PASTORIUS & BRIAN MELVINS: *Night Food* (Timeless SJP214)

MICHAEL PETRUCCIANI: *Live At The Village Vanguard* (Concord GW3006)

BUCKY & JOHN PIZZARELLI: *Swinging Seven* (Stash ST239)

EMILY REMLER: *Catwalk* (Concord CJ265)

HORACE SILVER: *There's No Need To Struggle* (Silveto SPR103)

DAVID TORN: *Best Laid Plans* (ECM 1284)

CHARLES TYLER: *Definite Vol 2* (Storeyyville SLP4099)

MAL WALDRON: *Set Me Free* (1969) (Affinity AFF116)

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EBERHARD WEBER: *Chorus* (ECM 1288)

MIKE WESTBROOK: *On Duke's Birthday* (HalArt 2012)

COMPILED BY BRIAN PRIESTLEY

Dear Wire . . .

WRONG TEMPO?

Your tribute to Charlie Parker was marred by Jeff Tempo's article on the photograph of Parker, Mingus, Monk & Hayne in the Grove Dictionary.

The fact that the photo was touched up and the naked woman painted over is worth a passing mention, for history shouldn't be rewritten – but two pages of idle fantasising is something else.

Tempo writes with positive relish of the brothel connection in jazz – but surely the history of Black American art music is largely the history of its struggle against its environment and exploitation. It's pointless to dwell on history without examining the causes.

Tempo's romanticising is a contemporary counterpart to much of the thinking behind the exploitation – racial and sexual – that dogged jazz's early days.

It's a real pity that *The Wire* chooses to publish stuff such as this.

Gus Garside, London SW2

I was surprised that your excellent publication would waste valuable space on such implausible fluff as Jeff Tempo's attack on Grove (*The Wire* 13: March).

In his attempt to pin crudeness – and, by wholly illogical extrapolation, racism – on the folks at Grove (by the way not a "text book", but a reference work), Tempo displays a certain atystic flair ("podded its pants" is a bit much, though) and an overwrought imagination, but no common sense at all.

A bit of the latter would have served to reveal that the two photos that serve as his "evidence", while made at the same place* and almost the same time, represent very different generations of reproduction. The bottom photo is a quality print, quite probably made by the photographer, Bob Parent, himself, while the top one is a poor copy, second or third generation, and probably mass-produced for publicity purposes. Furthermore, the bottom photo is quite simply a better shot, in terms of focus, lighting and angle. Nevertheless, outlines of Mr. Tempo's *bete noire*, the sexy mural in all its "opulent nymphal nakedness", are visible in the photo reproduced in Grove, including (egad!) one of the nipples. Clearly the photo was not airbrushed, and as any contributor to

Grove no doubt would confirm, it's doubtful in the extreme that this worthy enterprise had a budget for such frills. Thus, this example of what one might call *Recrudescence in Tempo* is utterly absurd and unworthy of the standards pretty well maintained by your publication.

Speaking of which – Issue 10 (December) contained, in Keith Shadwick's otherwise sensible "Jazz at the Phil", a reference to Benny Carter's playing that can only be described as impertinent, and meaningless as well. I have in mind Mr. Shadwick's unfortunate description of Carter's attack as "sometimes asinine". I'm a firm believer in freedom of expression, but as a former editor of jazz publications, equally dedicated to the principle that writers need to be protected, when possible, from public embarrassment.

Lastly, please forgive me for pointing out that the gentleman with the extended cigarette on the extreme right in the photo on page 31 of Issue 13 is not Red Callender but Shifty Henry, composer of *Dark Shadows*.

*The Open Door in New York City.

Dan Morgenthau, New Jersey, USA

HAIR OF THE GOD

Just a note to say how much I enjoyed Mr Lake's piece on Machine Gun! It's always been one of my favourite records. One detail – Mr Parker does, in fact, have a beard (although not as full as on, say, Karyobin) in the photo on the sleeve. Could S.L. be thinking of the photo in Downbeat by John (sic) Kilby, 11 Jan, 68?

Steve Beresford, London W9

THE GREAT DEBATE

I write briefly to support those who have requested details of tracks and dates as regards the records reviewed in "Soundcheck". In fact, I think they're just as important in the list of new releases. But, surely, there's a distinction to be made between first releases and, for example, a reissue of Ellington, Monk, Tatum or Parker. For those who have already a lot of Parker, it's essential that you list dates and tracks. Many of your readers (like me!) are not in a position to hear much live jazz. The music for us is the



gramophone record, and *The Wire* just isn't giving us what we need.

R. Collings, Burnley, Lancs

● OK, you win. We will be including track listings again in future issues – Ed.

KENNY CLARKE & ISLAM

Further to my letter concerning the media's trivialisation of Afro-American Islam (*The Wire* 14: April), I felt vindicated on seeing my point verified in the same issue.

In his obituary of Kenny Clarke, Mike Zwerin mentions the drummer's espousal of Islam. Like many similar reactionary writers before him, he makes great play of the fact that by taking an Arabic name in the Fifties, a Black American could escape the "Colored" classification. That there was some truth in this has been confirmed by others, but to suggest this was the main reason for thousands of conversions is a real libel – not least to people familiar to readers of this magazine such as Yusef Lateef, Jackie McLean and McCoy Tyner (Sulaimon Saud).

And how insulting to the memory of Kenny Clarke, a strong man and a sweet one, to use his obituary to suggest that those American musicians who settled in Europe "tend to be more interested in life's variety, more interesting than average". Just what does that say about those who stayed in America? Max Roach? Miles Davis? Cecil Taylor?

Every Afro-American who left the United States has had to deal with the guilt of realising that by doing so, they were escaping racism – initially, at least – rather than staying to fight it. Long a subject debated between expatriates and those they left behind, the question became more urgent, and uncomfortable, when Black nationalism reached a peak in the late Sixties and early Seventies.

Of course there were some who were able to find the peace of mind here to give up addictions that would have killed them had they stayed in the States, but Zwerin's nasty little piece does them a disservice also.

That many white writers would prefer the musicians they admire to have no truck with radical ideas is well-known, but to quote them out of context to make this

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point is just dishonest. Zwerin gets mileage out of Clarke's reported indifference to the Black Panthers and, for goodness' sake, Afro hairstyles. (What is this doing in an obituary?) In doing so, he makes the drummer out to be a reactionary which he certainly was not. What Clarke had to say to Art Taylor, a fellow Afro-American expatriate, was interesting, especially because it showed just how isolating exile can be – something that clearly affects Euro-Americans, too.

Finally, by implying that Europe still offers the good life for American musicians, Zwerin reveals an unacceptable degree of colour-blindness. What once seemed a haven for a pioneering handful of self-exiles can hardly be called that today. Vicious immigration policies and deportations, as well as racist attacks and murders on the streets of London or Paris have long made the notion of Europe as safety-zone unthinkable for anyone Black.

Val Walmer, London N16

DOWN THE POLL!

I must endorse Kenneth Ansell's re-exposure of the absurdity of polls in art. (I say "re-exposure" because this has been done in print in the past by numerous people ranging from Charles Mingus to yours truly.) Alternatively, how about giving the musicians a chance to vote for their favourite listeners?

Martin Davidson, Sydney, Australia

WAR DANCE

In the January issue (*Wire* 11) Max

Harrison refers to "publicity men like Stanley F. Dance". Because I have never at any time been anyone's publicity man, this is a gratuitous libel. If he has in mind the fifteen-year period of my association with Duke Ellington, when I fed a considerable amount of factual information about that musician to *Jazz Journal*, I should say that I thought I was doing my countrymen a service, particularly the many who, like me, regarded Ellington as the greatest living jazz artist. In any case, during all that time Ellington employed the late Joe Morgen, one of the most zealous and effective publicity men in the business. He had no need of another. My role was primarily that of a historian.

Mr Harrison is well aware that as a working journalist I have written quite as much "criticism" as he has. For many years I reviewed records regularly for *The Saturday Review*. I also interviewed over a hundred jazz musicians (including, incidentally, McCoy Tyner, Dizzy Gillespie and Charles Mingus) and produced or co-produced some eighty jazz albums. Moreover, the nine books for which I have been wholly or partly responsible have not allowed much time for press agency. It is not important if Mr Harrison and I disagree about many aspects of the music, nor is it unnatural, given the vast differences in our experience and background. But older readers may recall that I was once obliged to accuse him in print of plagiarizing statements I had made about the significance of three-piece reed sections. Ever since then I have been subjected to his malice, as well as insulting anagrams of prep school standard. The last of the latter came from a false address with a letter signed "Harrison", presumably

indicating that he had been elevated to the House of Lords.

Stanley Dance, Vista, CA92083

LAST POST

One item in my piece on Mike Westbrook (*The Wire* 14; April) was not actually written by me. I refer to the sentence "1985 is a big year for Westbrook: a book about his brass band has been commissioned by Quartet." While the first part of this sentence was mine, the second part was inserted without my knowledge. I mention this because, given Westbrook's stature and the fact that he has three British premieres forthcoming, I think it's pretty preposterous – and rather a slight – to suggest that someone writing a book about him is the highlight of his year.

Still, I guess I can always bill Quartet for the ad.

A second point re the April issue: I thought the slogan 'Best British' on the cover was, at least, insensitive, and also rather dismissive of the many excellent British artists not featured in the issue (not to mention those who were, but whose names were omitted from the cover).

Finally, on a more personal note, I'd like to say how sorry I am that Chrisie Murray has left *The Wire*. The few occasions I worked with her on *The Wire* were a real pleasure for me, and I think she must be one of the most efficient and reliable editors I've ever met. (She's also the only one who actively encouraged greater coverage of women musicians.) I trust she'll now be going on to better – or, at least, more lucrative – things. I wish her all the best.

Graham Lock, London N16.

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